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# Shrines of Our Lady

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*Illustrated by Johannes Troyer*



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

If I begin my acknowledgments with a Thank you to the Blessed Virgin, it is not a bid for pious attention nor an indication of personal holiness: I am stating sober fact. Twelve years ago the information for this book began to creep into my notes on unrelated subjects. Every time a new subject led me away from the Shrines, Our Lady firmly led me back again. Once, she even went so far as to drop a book off a top shelf and hit me on the head with it. I can take a hint. But I tried to point out to her that the normal way of acquiring information for a shrine book was to go and *see* the shrines. That being at the time impractical, I agreed to get to work on the matter if she would provide me with the necessary sources. She did. That is all there is to it. And the least I can do is say "Thank you."

Among those who materially assisted me in the appalling amount of work involved, I should like to name the following people. However, since some of them insist on being anonymous, I shall have to express my gratitude in more general terms. They know who they are, and more important—Our Lady knows.

My gratitude and my prayers to: the Marianist Fathers and Brothers at the University of Dayton, who laboured over and above the call of duty to put all the resources of the Marian Library at my disposal and managed to make me feel I was doing them a great favor by using it; the Dominican Father who tirelessly guided me through Latin and French of all varieties, and who eased the path of progress in a hundred practical ways; the Franciscan Father who dug up the German sources, and the Sister of Notre Dame de Namur who translated them for me; the Dutch author who sent me the material on Our Lady of Maastricht, and the nice little lady who translated it; the Dominicans at Fatima who got me the material on Our Lady of Nazareth; the Dominican Father who secured the South American material, and the Cloistered Dominican Sister who translated it; the two English Tertiaries from whom I received English, Polish and Spanish material; the Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus and Mary in Oakland, who were endlessly generous with library assistance; the four typists who condensed my trackless prose into readability; the Sisters of my own Community, who have been endlessly loyal and helpful; lastly, to the Cistercian Father for a critical reading of the manuscript.

# *Introduction*

IT IS a Greek tradition that Our Lady appeared to the Apostles after the Assumption and assured them that she "would be with them all days." Certainly in the nineteen centuries since then, she has been faithful to her children of Calvary. Like the good Mother she is, she never leaves us very long alone.

In each succeeding century we see around us the evils of the times and the faults of a fallen race. Today it is Communism we fear. In another age it was the Albigenian Heresy, or the Black Plague, or the Turks. No time in recorded history has been free of disaster. Besides the evils that we can see, there are the infinitely worse ones that we cannot see, for ours is a world where one must wrestle with principalities and powers and with spirits of wickedness in high places. So, being heedless and gullible children of Adam, we need a Mother—badly. And from time to time, in this place or in that, she comes to warn us of some danger, or to remind us to pray.

Why Our Lady should choose one place rather than another for her visits to earth, we do not know. We have no way of knowing either, why it is this person or that one

## *Introduction*

who is given a message for Mankind. We must presume that she has her reasons, and that they are good ones. Why a statue should turn up in the midst of a fever-ridden swamp, or on the edge of a precipice, and resist all efforts to move it; why a little worthless woodcut, grotesque and unbeautiful, should be the agency for a shrine of healing —these are Mysteries we cannot fathom. Why should it have been the Cave at Massabielle, and not the steps of Notre Dame Cathedral, where Our Lady appeared in 1858? Why should she have appeared in 1923 at Truk in the Carolines, to a people who scarcely had heard of her? We might as well admit that there is no human reason for these things, and that they are a part of the Divine plan. It is certain that, whatever her reasons, Our Lady chooses certain people to be her messengers, and certain places (or statues, or pictures) to be a Channel of Grace and healing. God, after all, chose a certain person to be His Channel of Grace: He chose Mary.

In a sense, every image of Our Lady is a shrine, from the Sistine Madonna down to the grubbiest dog-eared holy-card in the fist of a kindergartner and the frayed scapular on the neck of the Bowery drifter. Any such image does something to the heart of the one who looks, and pushes or pulls toward God. But a shrine, formally, is more than this. It is a place where devotions of some sort have been practiced for a long time; where there is a Church, a Chapel, or at least a separate dedicated altar; and where there is a history of miracles. Sometimes a shrine commemorates an apparition, as at Lourdes, where the Queen of Heaven appeared to a poor little peasant girl and

## *Introduction*

changed the face of the nineteenth century. Sometimes, as at Kevelaer, Our Lady has distinguished some piece of the art of men by making it the focal point for a shrine of healing. Sometimes, as at Algiers, a tiny wayside shrine has grown, over the years, into a place of pilgrimage—and has been suddenly rewarded with miracles after many years of undistinguished existence.

Because it is humanly impossible to discuss all her shrines, one must make a distinction somewhere. There are in this book forty-eight shrines, chosen arbitrarily from many countries.

There is no hope at all of getting a complete record of a shrine, except a very recent one; in most cases there are nothing but legends to go on. This collection, then, is not an exhaustive scholarly work of proofs and documents. It is for those who wish to spread devotion to Our Blessed Mother.

Being her children, we must remember that we cannot ignore a visit of Our Mother, and pretend it has no meaning for us simply because it happened in Spain or Belgium or South America. Her coming must make a difference in the lives of all of us. She did not come to Fatima only for Lucia, Jacinta and Francisco; she spoke to us as well. And unless our lives *are* changed, her visit has to that extent failed in its purpose.

## *Dedication*

Wherfor to The, O Lady, I present  
This symple boke thoughe it unworthy be  
But pore and symple and much ineloquent  
Rudely composyd in this tempestous se

—from THE SHIP OF FOOLS, 16th Century

# *England*

## **OUR LADY OF GLASTONBURY**

The miracle we now behold  
Fresh from Our Master's hand  
From age to age shall long be told  
In every Christian land,  
And kings and nations yet unborn  
Shall bless the Glastonbury thorn.

GLASTONBURY, according to tradition, was not only the first shrine of Our Lady in England but also the first Christian church. It is so very old that the history is now completely entangled with legends. One of these ascribes the beginning of the Shrine to St. Patrick and gives the date 432 as that of the building of the first permanent church. This tradition is open to question but everyone seems to agree on the charming legend that the very first church was built by Joseph of Arimathea, a few years after the Ascension of Our Lord. In this connection we recall the Christmas legend of Joseph's staff, which he struck in the ground to mark the site and which, it is said, always blooms at Christmas and was the first of the hawthorne trees in England.

Moving into the field of recorded history, someone in the year 433 described Glastonbury as "An ancient and holy spot chosen and sanctified by God in honor of the Immaculate Mother of God, the Most Blessed Virgin Mary," which indicates that it was by this time an old shrine. In

530 St. David of Menevia built a stone church and decorated it with many rich ornaments, among which was the famous sapphire altar. According to tradition, the nephew of St. David, King Arthur of the Arthurian legends, was brought here to die after he fell in the Battle of Camlin. His tomb and that of his queen were found here many years later.

Few shrines have been so loved by succeeding conquerors of a country. At the time of the Danish invasion, the last Saxon King of the Britons enriched the Abbey of Glastonbury with lands and possessions. After his defeat, the Danish King Canute likewise knelt at Our Lady's Shrine at Glastonbury and gave great gifts. The Norman Conquest brought trouble but the Normans likewise loved Glastonbury. Not until the time of Henry VIII, when the Shrine was completely pillaged and left in ruins, was there a break in the long history of devotion.

The statue of Our Lady honored here was of silver partly plated with gold and it enclosed relics, as did many medieval statues. Our Lady was standing, crowned, and held the Holy Infant on her left arm. In her right hand was a scepter topped by a fleur-de-lis. Among the other relics kept in the chapel were a robe and a red silk sash which had reputedly belonged to Our Blessed Lady, and which were rich in the history of its miracles.

Glastonbury Abbey and Church have been nothing but ruins for four centuries, but so appealing are the legends surrounding it that it has taken a permanent place in our literature. The legend of King Arthur and his knights and their pursuit of the Holy Grail is tied in so closely

with this ancient shrine that it is strange no one has rebuilt it as a literary monument, if nothing else. As recently as fifty years ago, skeptics were testing the legend of the thorn tree, and finding themselves confused because the tree did bloom at Christmas when other English hawthornes did not.

Many saintly people have been connected with Glastonbury. One of the most famous was St. Dunstan who, during his time there, beautifully rebuilt the abbey and the sanctuary, and who is famous in the monastic history of England for his educational work with boys. To this sanctuary came King Alfred when his country was facing destruction from the Danes, and it was here that he received strength to make a stand against them. King Henry II built up Glastonbury to its greatest architectural glory after a disastrous fire in 1184.

A later monarch, Henry VIII, stripped the Sanctuary not only of the jewels and the altar plate, but even of the lead and stone. He discovered the great altar with its sapphire, which an enterprising monk had at one time hidden by painting it over to look like wood.

Glastonbury has never been a pilgrimage place in the same sense as Walsingham or Canterbury, but much of English history has taken place in this remote sanctuary.



Perhaps some day English Catholics will restore it. A step was taken in this direction when in July, 1955, a new statue of Our Lady of Glastonbury was blessed and placed in a new little church near the ruins of the old abbey.

#### **OUR LADY OF WALSINGHAM, NORFOLK**

THERE IS an old legend to the effect that when Our Lady comes home to Walsingham, England will return to the Faith. The past twenty years have witnessed a most remarkable "return" to Walsingham, the forgotten shrine in the Norfolk countryside. So popular in medieval days was this place that all good Englishmen believed that the stars we call "The Milky Way" were simply the path to Walsingham.

Walsingham was originally a shrine honoring the Holy House of Nazareth, where the Holy Family lived. The date of Walsingham's founding is given as 1061, when Our Lady appeared three times to a pious woman by the name of Richeldis and told her to build a replica of the Holy House where the mystery of the Incarnation might be specially reverenced in England. Richeldis set about the task with great joy, and there were several miraculous signs given by which she knew where the chapel was to be built. In fact, Our Lady was considered the architect of Walsingham; her choice and her exquisite taste were reflected in this, England's greatest tribute to her.

The people who flocked to Walsingham were beyond counting. English people have always been fond of walking tours, and especially of pilgrimages. When Spring covers



their country with green beauty, hardly anyone can resist the temptation to get out away from the city for a walk in the country—and a pilgrimage to a shrine was the best possible excuse. This, of course, was on the human side; there were miracles at Walsingham, and it was a deeply devotional center. Queens and noble ladies brought their finest gowns for the statue, or left them in their wills to the little Lady of Walsingham. Kings pilgrimaged there and enriched the shrine with crown jewels. The last King to visit this shrine was the unfortunate Henry VIII, who in his early years, before he had left the Church and pulled all England with him, gave a magnificent necklace to adorn the Lady statue. Nearly thirty years later, after he had declared himself head of the church in England and was busy pillaging monasteries, he stole it back again. Dying embittered and out of the Church, he is said to have admitted to a friend that his heart was still lonely for Walsingham.

The destruction of 1538 was complete and the desolation lasted more than 300 years. Monastic properties were given to the King's favorites, and through the years the owners did not know or care that they were holding the land which had once belonged to Mary. Late in the nineteenth century, a descendant of the family, a devout Anglican, began to read about the lands her ancestors had re-

ceived. She was shocked and grieved to discover the true story, and set about returning the property to the Church. Little was left but the small Chapel of St. Catherine of Alexandria, called the Slipper Chapel. She secured this for the Church, and before her death had the happiness of being received back into the Church of her ancestors.

In the years since 1897, when the first new statue of Our Lady of Walsingham was set up in the parish church, tremendous things have happened there. On the four hundredth anniversary of the destruction of the Shrine, a great throng of people journeyed there from all parts of England for outdoor Masses, processions and acts of reparation. In 1948 the first great public pilgrimage since the Reformation was arranged. Fourteen crosses, made of wood sixteen feet high, were started with pilgrim groups from fourteen different points two weeks' journey from the shrine. In each company were priests to say Mass, hear Confessions and preach. People said the Rosary, sang litanies and took turns in carrying the crosses so that all would reach Walsingham for the Feast of the Assumption. This, in a country thought to be Protestant, was a miracle in itself. Nowhere in the march to the Shrine did anyone meet the slightest courtesy; in many places the non-Catholic ministers came out with their groups to join the procession, and in one place the Salvation Army band played them into town.

During World War II many foreign troops were stationed in England. Our own Americans were there, and boys who had never heard of Walsingham knelt there to pray for their dear ones beside exiled Polish troops with

their smuggled banner of Our Lady of Czestochowa. Where in its greatest day Walsingham saw pilgrims from all England, now its pilgrims in one week may come from twenty-five countries, including South America, Pakistan, New Zealand, and of course America. It is not too much to hope that Walsingham's greatest day has not yet dawned, and that some day this will be a great international shrine.

# *Ireland*

## **OUR LADY OF KNOCK, MAYO**

IRELAND's newest and most famous shrine to Our Lady dates from the year 1879. It is often called The Irish Lourdes, which is a mistake since the object of our Lady's visit was apparently quite different in the two places. What most people mean by this term is that Knock, like Lourdes, is a shrine of healing, a place where many find help and all find peace.

The Parish of St. John the Baptist at Knock was no poorer nor richer than most of its neighbors in the year 1879, when a long series of crop failures and other troubles had reduced most of the country to the edge of starvation. On the evening of August 21st of that year, a day of storm, wind and rain, most of its inhabitants were indoors, including the parish priest, Father Cavanagh. His house-keeper, Mary McLoughlin, had had the afternoon off, and was on her way to pay a visit to Mrs. Bierne and her daughter before returning to the parish house. In passing not far from the Church, she noticed that the gable was brightly lighted and thought it strange. However, since it was raining, she did not investigate but continued to her friend's home for a visit. After her visit she started once again to the parish house in company with Mrs. Bierne and her daughter.

As they neared the Church Mary McLoughlin saw

that there were figures in the light on the Church gable. Her first thought was that the Pastor had got some new statues; she was even a wee bit annoyed because he hadn't told her about them. It was Mary Bierne who first noticed that the figures were moving and could not possibly be statues. Mrs. Bierne sent her daughter to get the neighbors and they quickly gathered to see what the excitement was, for Mary was too excited to talk plainly. There were, in all, fourteen people who at some time during the next two hours saw the figures on the gable. These ranged from a six-year-old child and fourteen-year-old Patrick Hill to an old woman of seventy-six.

The scene at which these people devoutly gazed for two hours in the pouring rain was a highly significant one. In the center of the group, clad in white and sparkling like stars, was the Blessed Virgin. She wore a brilliant crown which flashed with rainbow colors as she moved her head. The Patriarch on her right was easily recognized as St. Joseph. The Bishop on her left was identified as St. John the Evangelist. He seemed to be reading or preaching but no sound was heard. Beside him stood an altar on which were a lamb and a cross, and behind which shining angels passed to and fro. The entire scene gave off such light that it could be seen, according to independent testimony, more than a mile away. Everyone there watched with great absorption, hating to leave even long enough to call someone else. It is not explained why they did not call the priest, but he was to hear about it only the next day.

The old woman went up and tried to put her arms around Our Lady's feet. Later, when the witnesses were



being examined as to whether the vision looked like a painting, she and all the others insisted that the figures were separate from the wall and moved like living creatures.

The best testimony of the Vision was given by Patrick Hill, who stood stock still and stared at it from seven-thirty, when it began, until two hours later when it faded away. He gave careful descriptions of all the figures, which the others said were accurate.

Our Lady of Knock appeared twice more the same year.

On these occasions many hundreds of people were present, but the stars on Our Lady's dress and crown shone so brightly that they could not see the faces. Because the testimony held up under questioning and because cures very soon started, the bishop authorized the building of a shrine. People soon thronged to Knock bringing their sick, and in a short time the sanctuary was filled with crutches and other offerings from people who had been cured there.

People from America and Australia were among the first to go there and benefit from the cures. The first organized pilgrimage was in the March following the Apparition. They have never ceased since. The ordinary routine of even a short visit to Knock consists of a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, the Way of the Cross, the Rosary, the Litany of Our Lady, another visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and the Creed.

What is the meaning of Our Lady's visit to Knock? At Lourdes and at Fatima she exhorted us to penance. In almost every other apparition of recent times there has been a warning given: "*Unless you do penance you will all perish.*" At Knock Our Lady spoke no words, but her message has been perfectly clear to her people of Ireland: Make the Mass the center of your world, remain faithful to the Mass no matter what happens; it is a pledge of future glory. Not many nations have suffered as Ireland has suffered. Few have kept the devotion to the Mass as doggedly through years of persecution. And probably no other nation has had a visit from Our Lady where she, like a Mother who is very pleased, simply smiled and said nothing.

**OUR LADY OF THANKS, YOUGHAL**

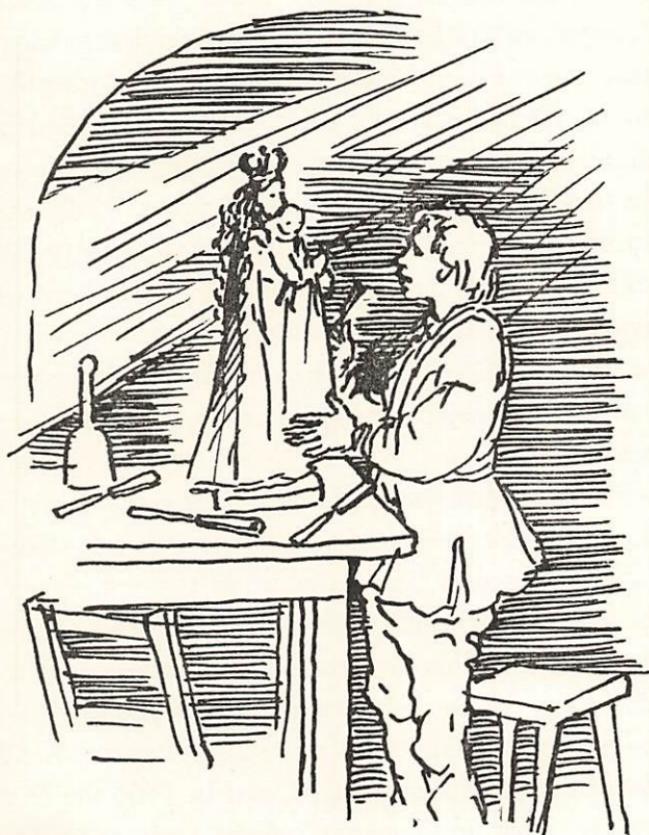
THE STORY of Our Lady of Thanks, sometimes called Our Lady of Graces, is intertwined with many legends. Like all the pre-Reformation statues in Ireland, the actual records have been lost and one must depend on the memory of the faithful.

According to the legends, an Italian youth of good family, who had been shipwrecked off the coast of Ireland, was admitted to the Dominican priory of the Holy Cross at Youghal, probably at some time during the early sixteenth century. The youth had had some training in sculpture, and he had a fine piece of marble which by some miracle had been saved from the shipwreck. This he planned to carve into a Madonna, but the Prior insisted that he use it for a pedestal for a statue of the Prior's patron saint. The lad obeyed, though reluctantly. Some time later, a small piece of ivory drifted in with the tide. It was badly stained and had several bad flaws, but the Prior told him to use it for the Madonna, as long as he was so anxious to carve one. The young man decided to complete the Madonna for the Prior's feast day, but the work was slow and by the eve of the feast it was still unfinished. He stayed up most of the night working on it, but still could not finish it satisfactorily, so finally he went to bed.

In the morning he resolved to throw the piece away and ask for a new one, he was so dissatisfied with the carving; but when he went to look at it, he realized that someone else had been working on it. It was beautiful, and it had some strange power to make his heart content. It

was set up in the cloister hall, and soon the brothers began reporting miracles through the intercession of Our Lady. Eventually the statue was placed in the chapel, where outsiders could pray before it. The miracles continued until the only possible title for the little statue was Our Lady of Graces.

In 1581 the soldiers of Elizabeth I raided the countryside, burning and looting monasteries. The brother who had carved the little statue was old by that time, too old



to go to the rescue of the statue when the soldiers came. He gave it into the care of a novice and told him to hide it. The novice fled into the priory forest, but was seen by a soldier and shot down. Dying, he thrust the little statue into the niche of a large tree. No one knew where it had gone, and for many years the Dominicans, like other religious, were banned from Ireland.

Many years later, the Irish Dominicans reorganized on the coast of Brittany. Their priory was only a hut and they were painfully poor. One day a great log floated in and lodged on the beach. One of the neighbors wanted it because it was of good oak, but when he tried to split it up he could not make a dent in it. Finally he called in the Dominicans. One very old brother, who had been a novice at the time the monastery in Ireland was raided, asked to try splitting the log. To humor him, they let him try. At the first blow the log flew open, revealing a hollow where, wrapped in a blood-stained Dominican scapular, was a tiny ivory statue of Our Lady. The old brother recognized it, and with great rejoicing Our Lady was once more enthroned.

This much, of course, is legend. It could be true; no one insists that it is. Another legend says that the daughter of an Earl rescued the statue when the monastery was raided, and fled with it across the Blackwater river, where she kept it in hiding for years as an inspiration to the priests who were working underground. The truth is that we do not know. But it had come back into the hands of the Dominican Fathers by 1698, and in 1756 the Dominicans were back in Youghal, where they re-established

their old ruined priory and set up the little ivory statue. We have on record the miracles worked at the shrine on the return of the Dominicans to Ireland. The priory was built up and enriched by several benefactors who had personally felt the help of Our Lady of Graces.

The statue is now at the Dominican church in Cork, set into a magnificent shrine given by a happy client of the little Lady of Graces. Probably in thanksgiving, someone renamed the statue Our Lady of Thanks, and this name has remained. The statue is very tiny, hardly three inches long, carved of a very inferior piece of ivory. Our Lady is seated and has the Holy Infant on her knee. It does not seem pretty to us now, which does not matter at all to the hundreds who have received graces at her hands.

#### OUR LADY'S ISLE, WEXFORD

THE RECORDS of the shrine of Our Lady at Wexford go back only to the eleventh century, but tradition claims that there was a shrine at this spot from the very earliest days of Christianity in Ireland. It is not far from the ancient pilgrimage place of penance at Lough Derg (called St. Patrick's Purgatory) and is in many ways connected with it. Tradition insists that the church at Our Lady's Isle was built before the year 600 and was called The Church of the Bright Plain because the water of the lake, seen from afar, glittered like a mirror to the incoming pilgrims.

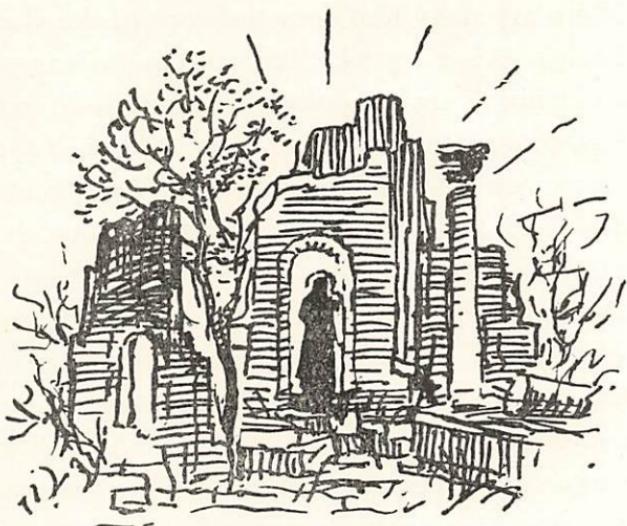
However that may be, the legend for which Our Lady's Isle will be longest remembered concerns the mid-seventeenth century, when Oliver Cromwell was making

his way through Ireland, plundering monasteries and churches. The shrine of Our Lady at Wexford was ancient and well-known by this time. There were several pilgrimages during the year, of which the one marking Lady Day was the greatest. This principal feast, August 15th, saw everyone who could walk or be moved making the pilgrimage there. The last distance was made by means of small boats, and the pilgrims approached the island singing the praises of Mary.

Somehow this shrine had been overlooked in previous forays of the English soldiers. Cromwell heard of it and planned the raid for the day when most people would be on hand. During the singing of the High Mass of the Assumption, he and his men crossed the water and attacked the church.

Unarmed, the parishioners put up what battle they could. The priest was killed early in the struggle, and one small altar boy by the name of Duffy found himself the only guardian of the altar vessels. Gathering them in the skirt of his cassock, he ran out the sacristy door but found that every way was blocked by soldiers. He ran to the nearest point of land and threw the sacred vessels as far as he could into the lake. They sank out of sight just as the enraged soldiers discovered him and killed him. They threw his body into the lake and demolished the church, leaving it afire.

After they had gone away and the fire died down, it was seen that the stone statue of Our Lady still stood upright among the ruins. For many years no one dared to go there except by night. The faithful remembered the story



and passed it on until, after many years, they were once again free to make the Assumption pilgrimages. They rowed their boats slowly over the place where the altar boy had gone down, and prayed that they too would have the courage to die for the Faith. Fresh persecution soon gave them the chance to do so. Years went by and the legends were all but forgotten.

Eventually a church was built on the mainland across from the island. Here, late in the nineteenth century, a parish priest was teaching catechism on a drowsy afternoon when three children slipped away from class and made their way to the Island. As they stepped up on the beach they saw a lovely Lady weeping among the ruins. Frightened, they hurried back to the priest and told him what they had seen. He investigated the history of the place and decided to begin the pilgrimages again. With a few interruptions they have continued since then.

There are many who deny the story of the altar boy, and dismiss it as a legend. However, no one can explain how a crucifix of ancient design happened to be found on the lake bed one year when the water was low. Every few years some new bit of evidence comes to light, confirming the lovely old legend of Our Lady's altar boy, in spite of the lack of written records.

During the Marian year, when the modern apostle of the Rosary, Father Peyton, was touring Ireland, he planned a series of rallies in different towns in honor of Our Lady. The concluding was one was held at Wexford, at the scene of the ancient shrine. Here the greatest number of people to assemble at any of the rallies gathered to praise Our Lady. Perhaps, after more than 300 years, this ancient shrine will once more rise from its ruins, and the voices of pilgrims will be heard again there on Lady Day.

# *Scotland*

## **OUR LADY OF ABERDEEN**

THE STATUE of Our Lady of Aberdeen has been in Belgium for 400 years. The deeply pious people of Brussels have gladly given it a home from the time of its exile from Scotland during the Reformation. Most of the legends concern the time when it was still in Scotland, before that country had left the old faith.

No one knows exactly where the statue came from in the beginning. Some, indeed, claim that it is a Flemish statue, which means that it is not really in exile; others claim it is an Italian statue. It really does not matter very much. Scottish records link it with the Cathedral Church of St. Macarius in the time of St. Margaret of Scotland, which was the eleventh century. Like many another old statue, this little Madonna had grown so deeply into the hearts of her people that no one needed to keep written records to know that she was Queen of Scotland.

Our Lady of Aberdeen emerges a little from the mists of legend in the time of the saintly bishop Gavin Dunbar, who was the last Catholic bishop of Scotland before the Reformation. According to tradition she helped him to build a bridge across the River Dee. The devil had defied him and told him he would throw down any bridge he would put up, but the Madonna's bridge was a

fine one with seven arches and it lasted many years. Bishop Dunbar placed the statue in a little niche on the bridge, a form of devotion very popular at that time. Near one end of the bridge a spring bubbled forth. People were not slow in claiming that it had miraculous qualities.

However, clouds were gathering over Scotland. The Bishop moved the statue back to the Cathedral where he felt it would be safer. There, at the saddest moment of his life, Our Lady appeared to him and told him that Scotland would abandon the Faith and that all her sanctuaries would be destroyed. Bishop Dunbar did not live to see all of this sad prophecy accomplished, but he knew that his beloved statue was no longer safe and that Catholic Scotland was doomed.

It is interesting to note that a hundred years after Bishop Dunbar's death, some Protestants who were digging a grave accidentally came across his tomb. They were surprised and a little embarrassed to find his body incorrupt. Several times during the next few years they looked again and found the same fact to be true. Finally they sealed up the tomb so that no one would be led astray by this strange phenomenon.

The shrines at Paisley, Melrose, Haddington and Jedburgh were destroyed completely. Aberdeen was the last to go. The statue was passed from hand to hand for safe keeping and did not seem to be in danger until John Knox himself resolved to destroy it. He offered a rich prize for whoever would turn it in, and his soldiers were busy in every part of Aberdeen trying to find it and earn the reward. The statue had many hairbreadth escapes. Some-

times the soldiers were within inches of their prize. It is the pride of the Scots that no one ever betrayed Our Lady of Aberdeen, in spite of the rich rewards offered.

One soldier had an unexpected piece of good luck with regard to the statue, although not in quite the form he had expected. Being one of a search party who hit upon the right hiding place, he picked up the statue and made off with it. His fellow soldiers thought he was running to get the reward. The situation was quite different, as he explained afterward. The minute he touched the statue he was compelled to run and, much as he would have liked to stop, he was completely unable to do so. He ran until he reached his own home. His wife let him in the door and, recognizing what he had, began to scold him for being so foolish as to bring such a prize home. He explained to her that he couldn't help himself. She set the statue upon the mantel. The more she looked at it the more something happened to her heart. There was a pounding at the gates. They both knew it was the raiding party who had followed him home, and they realized that they would be punished severely if they showed any reverence to the statue. Still neither of them could move. They stood rooted to the floor while the raiding party came and turned everything in the house upside down to find the statue. It stood upon the mantel piece in plain sight and the soldiers could not see it. After the soldiers had left, the man and his wife knelt before the statue and promised to return to the old faith, and to give their lives if need be in getting Our Lady of Aberdeen safely away from Knox.

It was thought better to take the statue out of the country, so it was smuggled to a captain whose ship was just ready to leave for the Netherlands. The package was addressed to the Archduchess Isabella of Brussels, who was well known for her devotion to Our Lady, and who had a fleet capable of defending Our Lady of Aberdeen.



The captain's troubles began almost the moment the statue came on board. First of all, the troops of Knox were suspicious and almost found the package hidden in the ship. Once the ship had cleared the harbor they ran into a violent storm. Badly injured in the storm, the ship did not dare put back to Aberdeen for fear the statue would be found, so it limped on toward the Continent. In this disabled condition they were terrified to see a pirate ship bearing down upon them. An unarmed merchantman had no defense against a pirate ship except flight, which was impossible with the damage left by the storm. The

worried captain presented his petition to Our Lady, told her quite frankly that there was nothing he could do to save the ship and begged her to take over. The raider came alongside and the pirates tried to board. They could not do so. Their bullets went wild of the mark. Everyone could see that the merchantman was completely helpless and at their mercy and yet, after two hours of violent struggle, the pirate ship had to pull away unsuccessful, having inflicted no damage at all. After all the difficulties, the least one could expect was that the ship would take a very long time for the crossing. It arrived in Brussels, minus most of its sails, right on time.

Perhaps the captain had already had enough of dealing with miraculous statues; perhaps it was simply that he talked too much. In any case a high official at the court who had heard the story of the statue begged to take it home with him. The captain gave it to him. The next day the official awoke with a fever which grew worse so rapidly that by evening his wife summoned the priest. Faced with a death-bed confession, the man admitted that he had a statue that didn't belong to him. He gave it to the priest to take to the Archduchess and soon was out of danger.

The Archduchess received the statue with great joy. Her fleet was that day to engage in battle. She consecrated her troops to Our Lady under the patronage of the little statue from Aberdeen, and when news of her victory came later in the day, she resolved to honor the statue in every way possible. She bestowed upon it the title of Our Lady of Good Success, and in the victory parade that took place

when her fleet came home, the little statue wore Isabella's wedding jewels and a dress of the finest gold tissue. It was placed at that time in her private chapel and later was moved to the church of the Augustinians. Many years later, when this became a Protestant church, the little statue was moved again to the Church of Finistere.

Several times the little Lady from Scotland has saved her adopted city from shells and, of late years, bombs. In 1695 Brussels was shelled and all the area around the Church suffered. The Church was left intact. On several later occasions the same thing happened.

During the French Revolution the statue was hidden to escape the Revolutionaries. Except for these few years, she has reigned undisturbed from her borrowed throne.

The statue is now dressed, although it was not always so. Our Lady wears a rich blue robe and carries a rosary and the key to the City of Brussels. The Babe is on her right arm. It is a very simple statue and yet very beautiful. A Confraternity of Our Lady of Good Success has existed for many years in Brussels. It was begun by the Archduchess as one means of honoring the Little Visitor from across the Channel. As far as is known, this is the only pre-Reformation Scottish statue in existence.

# *Spain*

## **OUR LADY OF THE DEW, ALMONTE**

THE SHRINE of Our Lady of the Dew is a popular pilgrimage place of Moorish Spain. For most of the year the little village surrounding the sanctuary is deserted, and no one lives there except the priest who is in charge of the shrine. However, for the week of the pilgrimages, people come from all over Southern Spain and the place is alive with horses, wagons, and pilgrims who camp out and make a picnic out of this religious occasion.

Legends tell us that the statue of Our Lady of the Dew was found in a hollow tree, at the place where the sanctuary now stands. It was discovered by a shepherd whose dog kept barking at the tree until his master investigated and found the statue. He took it with him down into the village of Almonte, but it returned by itself to the little grove of trees where he had found it. Accordingly a church was built there, and people began coming to pray before the statue which they named Our Lady of the Dew, for the curious reason that the dew had spoiled her dress when she was hidden in the tree!

Popular imagination gave the statue a miraculous origin, but most people agree that it was probably one of the treasures hidden away from the Moors when they invaded Spain. It is a fairly large statue, four feet high, and had been dressed in a linen gown. Our Lady of the



Dew now wears rich robes of metallic cloth and is decked with many jewels.

The pilgrimages, which began in the seventeenth century shortly after the image was found, are not strictly of a religious character. Customs have grown up which are local and national rather than religious. But it is interesting to see the ways in which people choose to honor one whom they love dearly. Many miracles, including preservation from the plague in 1649, have endeared her to her people. Since the people of Southern Spain usually celebrate any occasion with songs and dances, it is not surprising that they honor Our Lady in this way, too.

Every year, then, at the time of the pilgrimage, each village of the vicinity decorates its own group of wagons, and the pilgrims, dressed in bright costumes and singing gay songs, set out across the miles of desert for the shrine. Each confraternity or parish group marches behind a banner and has certain appointed officers to lead the march, the songs, and the prayers. There are contests between the groups to see who can sing the best, decorate the prettiest wagons, dance the longest. The time at the shrine is divided between prayers and dancing in a way to make an outsider a little confused. It is to be supposed that the gay array of costumes and song, gifts of a simple-hearted people who love and honor The Stainless One, are pleasing to her who so often meets only indifference among the sons of men.

#### **OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE, ESTREMADURA**

THE SHRINE of Our Lady of Guadalupe is one of the few settled spots in the wild mountains of Estremadura in the North of Spain. The statue itself dates from before the Moorish conquest, and was supposedly sent to St. Leander, Bishop of Seville, by Pope St. Gregory the Great in the year 580. At the time of the Moorish invasion, it was hidden in an underground cave, covered with a churchbell. With it was buried a packet of papers to tell what statue it was and to whom it had belonged.

Some centuries after the conquest the statue was rediscovered, according to legend, in this way. A cowherd, searching for a lost cow, followed it into the mountains

and found it at last, dead, on the banks of a small stream. Resolved to save the hide, he was in the act of cutting into it when a voice stopped him. He looked around, knowing well that he was alone in the mountains. He saw a lovely Lady advancing out of the forest. She told him to dig nearby and he would find something of great value, and that she wished him to have a chapel built there. After she had disappeared he turned to see two things—the cow, alive, and a cleft in the ground where she had pointed for him to dig. He dug there and discovered the underground cave, and the statue and bell which had been buried for so long. As soon as it could be managed, a chapel was built.

In spite of being very difficult to reach, the little chapel soon became well known and loved. After a great victory in 1340, the King himself came to make pilgrimage there and left rich gifts. The King had the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe placed on his banner which



was carried into battle and which was always victorious. Due to royal patronage the shrine grew rich and famous. The hermits of St. Jerome were placed in charge of the church and hospice.

The statue itself is of Oriental wood, and is unstained and unharmed both by its many years of burial underground and by the years since. It has by now a vast and costly wardrobe, given by Spanish princesses and noblewomen. Some of the finest altar vestments in Spain are here in the sacristy and many jewels are in Our Lady's treasury.

Because of the shrine's great popularity at the time of the New World explorations, the Western hemisphere is dotted with places and shrines named for the little Lady of Guadalupe. The greatest shrine in North America is named for her, by mistake as it seems; the Aztec word was impossible for Spaniards to pronounce, but it sounded like "Guadalupe," which they loved. Central America, too, has many copies of this little Madonna, many of which have place names of their own.

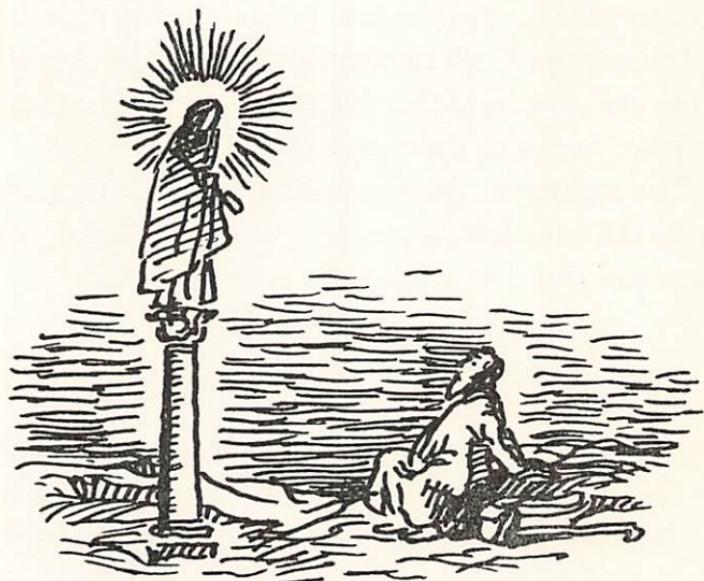
The register at the shrine of Guadalupe lists more than 3,000 miracles supposedly performed there. Most of them are cures, or victories in military matters.

#### **OUR LADY OF THE PILLAR, SARAGOSSA**

SARAGOSSA in Spain claims the honor of having had a visit from Our Lady during her lifetime. The Shrine at this place is so old that by now it is entwined with legends that make it hard to find out for certain what happened so long

ago. However, this is of no concern to the Spanish people, who accept without question the story that Our Lady visited their beautiful land in Apostolic times and so made it into one of the great Christian countries.

The legend relates that when St. James the Apostle began his mission in Spain he had little success. Before leaving the Holy Land he had gone to say good-by to Our Lady, who promised him that he would do great work there. However, he was slow in getting started, and one night as they were camped on the banks of the River Ebro he felt quite discouraged. Here Our Lady appeared to him on top of a pillar of sparkling jasper stone. She told him to erect a church there in her honor and promised him that his mission would be fruitful as soon as he did so. Departing, she left behind her the jasper pillar on which she had stood.



The church was accordingly built and for nineteen centuries it has been the center of religious life in Spain. Several churches have been built since the first one. The present magnificent basilica dates from the sixteenth century. It is a treasure house of art in a country that has produced many world-renowned artists.

The Jasper Pillar of the Apparition is the greatest relic in this church. It stands about six feet high and is a straight pillar with no decorations. For many centuries it has been encased in silver, leaving only a small opening at the back where the faithful may kiss it. On top of the pillar is the very old statue which was carved long ago to remind people that this was where Our Lady stood. The statue is made of black wood covered with gold leaf and is only fifteen inches high. The Madonna and Child are both robed in magnificent garments heavy with jewels and embroidery, many of which are artistic masterpieces in their own right. It is said that Our Lady of the Pillar has a different gown for every day in the year. Besides the gowns of Mother and Child, there are richly embroidered capes, somewhat like those worn by bullfighters. Originally part of the Spanish court costume, these are now peculiar to this statue and are richly embroidered.

Around the Sanctuary hang banners captured from the Moors more than a thousand years ago. There also are other trophies indicating that Our Lady of the Pillar was often invoked in battle. The heart of Don Juan of Austria, who led the Christians to victory in the great sea battle of Lepanto in 1571, is preserved there in a golden reliquary.

Spanish explorers carried the devotion of Our Lady of the Pillar to the New World. Almost every country colonized by Spain has in it at least one large shrine to Our Lady of the Pillar, some of which have carried on the reputation for miracles enjoyed by the original.

There is a special register kept, listing the miracles of Our Lady of the Pillar. These are too many to mention, but one outstanding one has found its way into recorded history. It happened that in the sixteenth century a young man by the name of Michael, from the village of Calandra, was injured in battle and lost his left leg. When he returned home after the war he was very much embittered and paid little attention to his good mother's admonitions to go to Mass. Heartbroken at her son's condition, she went to Our Lady of the Pillar and prayed for his conversion. When she returned from the shrine, she went to call her son so that he could go to work. He was a heavy sleeper, and she reached to shake him by the foot when suddenly she saw that there were two feet, not one. Our Lady had replaced the missing limb, and when Michael awoke it became clear that she had also changed his heart. This miracle, which would readily be disputed, was recorded by people whose authority could not be challenged. It is one of the very few miracles from so long ago where we have sworn testimony.

In another way the Spaniards have preserved the memory of Our Lady's visit. No one can count the girls named "Pilar" in her honor, but each one is a testament of Spanish love for Our Lady.

# *Portugal*

## **OUR LADY OF NAZARETH, PEDERNEIRA**

THE LITTLE STATUE of Our Lady now honored as Our Lady of Nazareth was brought from the East in the eighth century, in the care of a Greek monk, Cyriacus, from Nazareth. It was set up in the monastery of Caulina near Lerida. Called "Our Lady of Nazareth" because the monk and, presumably, the statue had come from there, it was honored by the people of the Visigothic kingdom in Portugal.

At the time of the Moorish invasion the Visigothic reign ended, and the last King, Rodrigo, fell in combat at the desperate battle of Guadalete. According to Moorish tradition he was killed in this battle. However, the Spanish have always insisted that he was not killed, but badly wounded.

According to the Christian traditions, Rodrigo escaped, wounded, from the fatal field of Guadalete, and found his way to the monastery of Caulina in the nearby mountains. Horse and armor were gone, and his companions dispersed and helpless. No one answered his call at the deserted monastery, for the monks had fled with their statues and sacred vessels in terror of the Moors. In the great deserted church he met one old monk who had been unable to travel with the rest. The old monk tended the wounded king until both could travel. Then they took

up the only house treasures that the monks had left—the little statue of Our Lady, and a small box with the relics of St. Bartholomew—and disappeared into the mountains. After long travel they found a place near the sea where a hermit had once lived. Choosing two caves about a mile apart, they settled down to prayer and penance for their suffering country. The monk, whose name was Romano, kept the statue of Our Lady and built for it a crude chapel among the great rocks near the sea. After some years, feeling himself at the point of death, he buried the statue in the cave. Rodrigo died soon after and all trace of the statue was lost.

Several crusades against the Moors were attempted and some of the Spanish lands fell once again into Christian hands. For centuries the peninsula was a battleground where devout Christian knights fought to free their land. In the year 1182, one of the knights of King Alfonso Henriques, by name Fuas Roupinho, was hunting in the vicinity of the hermit's cave. He found the statue of Our Lady where the monk Romano had hidden it, and would have liked to take it home with him, but he felt that he was not worthy to do so. Setting it upon a shelf in the cave, he knelt and prayed to Our Lady for his unfortunate country. From time to time after that, as he hunted nearby, he would go into the cave to pray at his private shrine.

On the Feast of the Holy Cross in the same year, Fuas Roupinho was again hunting in the mountains, and gave chase to a great stag. The stag raced off among the rocks, with the horse and hounds in hot pursuit. The excited hunter did not notice where the stag was leading him,



until suddenly he was on the edge of a steep cliff. The stag plunged off and, in midair, turned into the devil. The horse was going too fast to stop. Fuas Roupinho, in the seconds left him, called upon Our Lady of the cave to help him. The horse struggled and held so hard that his hoof-prints can be seen to this day in the solid rock where he reared back and saved his rider from death on the devil's rocks.

Fuas Roupinho wished to build a great church in memory of his miraculous rescue, and he thought it would

be a fine idea to build it near the cliff. When the workmen started to dig for the foundations of the church, they found the small box with the relics of St. Bartholomew which the monk Romano had guarded long ago, and a manuscript telling the story of the statue and the flight from Guadalete. Fuas Roupinho happily spent his entire fortune building a large church, which was later replaced by one still larger. The pilgrimages to Our Lady of Nazareth started when the statue from the hermit's cave was enthroned in the knight's church, and have continued until now. The hermit's cave, and the little grotto where the statue used to be, are now part of the large church.

The Feast of Our Lady of Nazareth is celebrated each year by taking the famous statue to visit one of the neighboring parishes. There are seventeen of these, and they anxiously wait their turns to entertain the statue for a celebration lasting two days, after which the statue is returned, in procession, to its own church.

The statue is small, quite dark, and has the Infant Jesus in her arms.

# *France*

## **OUR LADY OF ALL HELP, ABBAYE-AUX-BOIS**

THIS SHRINE of Our Lady dates from the year 1640, although the statue had been in the same abbey for probably two centuries before any miraculous occurrence. The statue was rather faded and was not thought stylish enough for the chapel. It was placed under a staircase near the infirmary, where its most frequent visitor was the old lay sister who had charge of sweeping the corridor. One day, as she was busy about her work, the statue spoke to her, and told her to hurry up to the infirmary because one of the sisters needed her. The sister named was not a patient, but a nurse. She had been perfectly well a short time before and the lay sister saw no particular reason to think that she was dying. However, she went and arrived just in time to summon the priest, for the sister was indeed dying.

Shortly after this a community benefactor, whose son was at death's door with fever, saw the boy instantly cured on invoking Our Lady before this statue. After this it was moved into the chapel, and many miracles followed. One miracle was worked in favor of a sister who had been terribly burned; she was instantly cured. A priest, falsely accused of a crime, was acquitted after special prayers to the miracle Lady. The statue had had no name before this. They decided to call her Our Lady of All Help

At the time of the French Revolution the abbey was destroyed. A pious lady took the statue and safeguarded it until the trouble was over. After her death it was restored to the community. It has survived several wars since.

The statue is about two feet high, seated, with the sun for a background. Branches of brass lilies and tapers make a halo, and she holds a sceptre.

There is a short and very lovely prayer which for centuries has been associated with this statue. It is, "Oh, Mother of all Help, say but one word in our behalf to Thy Divine Son, for He cannot refuse thee any favor. Amen."

#### **OUR LADY OF THE BLESSED VALLEY, LAUS**

THE STORY of Our Lady of Laus is possibly the only case on record where a series of apparitions lasted for such a long time—more than fifty years. They began in 1664 and the seer, as has happened so many times before and since, was a little shepherdess.

Her name was Benoite Rencurel, and she was very poor. From the time she was twelve until the beginning of the apparitions, when she was seventeen, she worked very hard at one job and then another. At this time she was watching the sheep of a man who was so cross that hardly anyone would work for him. In addition to this work, since he did not pay her enough to live on, she was working in the evenings at the home of a widow with several children. Benoite, in short, had no time to her-

self. She was a very devout girl and particularly fond of the Rosary.

On the day of the first apparition, she had sat down in the ruins of an old building to eat her lunch. The building had once been a chapel, but Benoite did not know this; she simply sat there because the sheep were grazing near. She looked up in surprise as an old man dressed in red came up and spoke to her. He introduced himself as St. Maurice, pointed out to her a spring where she could get a drink of good water, and told her to go to a certain valley in the mountains with her sheep and she would have her heart's desire.

The next day Benoite did as the old man had suggested and there, for the first of many times, she saw the Lady who was to guide her for many years. She was a beautiful Lady, with a lovely Baby. Benoite, who knew that there was an old limekiln nearby, asked her if she had come to buy lime. The Lady smiled and did not speak. The smile was so heavenly that Benoite could not get it out of her mind. She could hardly wait to get back the next day. For nearly two months she met the Lady daily at the same site; the Lady did not speak, but her presence was so delightful that it made Benoite happy just to look at her.

Eventually, as one might expect, the neighbors became curious. They knew that this particular valley offered poor grazing for sheep, and they told Benoite's employer that she was neglecting her charge for some fanciful visitor. He forbade her to go to the valley again. The sheep went by themselves. She tearfully reported this



to him and he went the next day with the sheep, to prove that she was wrong. After a long, hard day trying to get his sheep out of the rocky valley, which they persisted in entering no matter what he would do, he gave up. The sheep, he observed, were as fat as anyone else's sheep. Let Benoite take them where she wished.

This brought the affair to public notice, however.

The magistrate was called in and he asked Benoite who the Lady was. She did not know. He told her to make a good confession, receive Holy Communion, and ask the Lady. This she did, and she received the answer that she had known in her heart: *I am Mary, the Mother of Jesus.* (Our Lady asked for prayers and processions.)

Benoite's neighbors took up the project with surprising enthusiasm. They actually organized the first procession soon after this. But to Benoite, sorrow had come. She did not see the Lady for more than two months. She suffered in silence, wondering what she had done to displease her. Then one day she saw her again, unexpectedly, in a different place. She had gone into a ruined chapel to pray, and suddenly over the neglected altar her heavenly visitor stood in a glow of light. Benoite, embarrassed at the condition of the altar, began dusting it with her apron. The Lady smiled and assured her that before long there would be a great revival of devotion in this place and that nothing would then be lacking for honoring her Son. She told Benoite that many sinners would come and be converted in the chapel which she wanted her to build, and that her grace would always be felt in this valley.

Benoite began the work herself, by trying to repair the ruined chapel. Soon the neighbors began to help her. Without any conscious campaign or effort, the project got under way to build a large church. At first dozens of people came, then hundreds, then thousands. They made heroic efforts to climb the almost impossible roads, and stayed overnight in the open to pray to Our Lady. So

many miracles occurred that church authorities came to investigate. They found a curious thing going on; poor people, people without a penny to give, were working long hours on the church, and every pilgrim brought a stone up the steep trail to the valley of Laus. Who had told them to do so? It wasn't quite clear. But the project was going on and gathering speed. Money trickled in. A poor woman gave a gold piece that kept the work going for a week. One day a roll of gold coins was found in the alms box. The slot in the top of the box was not wide enough to admit a roll of coins, but there it was. And the work went on.

There were good reasons why the Church should be cautious about a shrine being built in such a place. It was far from any city; the roads were mountain trails, impassable in the winter and dangerous even in summer. There was nothing to go on but the word of a little shepherdess, who had built herself a hermitage near the scene and was directing the work. The vicar-general of the diocese came to investigate and, for a number of reasons, was not favorably impressed with what he saw. He was ready to go back to the bishop with a bad report when his party was marooned by a mountain storm. For three days the rain fell in torrents, and on the last morning he found why Our Lady had kept him there; he was witness to a miracle. A woman who had been dragging herself to Mass for a novena, a hopeless cripple at the verge of death, stood up and walked, and was completely cured. The shrine went forward, on a grander scale than ever. This enlisted the vicar-general's help, and the plans of

When it was finished, in this all-but-impossible spot, people agreed that the church itself was one of Our Lady's promised miracles.

Benoite had much trouble for the rest of her life. She continually enjoyed visions of Our Lady, who told her what to do about the building of the church, but never a word about her own affairs. The girl lost her best friend when the vicar-general died, and later priests decided that she was a humbug and forbade her to receive Communion.

Benoite received the stigmata, the outward sign of the wounds of Our Lord, and her life was a series of ecstasies. Her days were full of activity, all of it connected with the building of the sanctuary of Laus. For a time she was kept in jail by people who did not believe in her. Often she was denied the spiritual help she needed. She became a Dominican Tertiary and tried to live as normal a life as possible.

One of the things that no one has ever been able to explain about Laus is the perfume. Our Lady promised Benoite that her grace would always be there in the valley, and that on certain days when she was performing miracles there would be a noticeable perfume in the region. The perfume persists to this day; ordinarily it comes on feasts of Our Lady, and sometimes it becomes known what miracle occurs at that time.

Three times the shrine of Laus was desecrated and pillaged; each time it was built up again. Today it remains, a place of mystery and grace, isolated and lovely, high in the protecting mountains.

Benoite died a lonely death, yet people in far-off vil-

laces and lonely settlements who could not possibly have been told about it appeared at her funeral. Eighty years later, because of a building accident, her tomb was opened and it was found that her body was preserved intact. Her cause was proposed for beatification in 1871, but it has never been completed.

#### OUR LADY OF HOPE, PONTMAIN

DURING the War of 1870 between France and Germany, the Germans took one action which military historians have never quite explained. They had taken Paris in January of 1871, and stood at the gates of Laval, a key city. The countryside was weakened from sickness and hunger, for the crops had failed and a severe winter caused much suffering. It would have been simple to take Laval and plunge on into Brittany and Normandy. On the night of January 17th, when all the suffering country of France presumed they would do this, the Germans turned back and spared Laval.

There was an explanation which many good people took to heart. On the eve of this day, in the little village of Pontmain, thirty miles from Laval, a vision of Our Lady appeared in the sky just at dusk. She was visible there for several hours, though only to the children. Her message at that time was one of hope.

The children who first saw her were Joseph and Eugene Barbedette, aged ten and twelve. They were helping their father feed the cows when Eugene, going to the barn door to look at the weather, was transfixed by the

appearance of the sky. It was a clear bright evening and there were many stars. In one part of the sky there seemed to be a blank place where no stars were. In this space three bright stars suddenly appeared surrounding a lovely Lady dressed in a dark blue gown covered with stars. She wore blue shoes and a black veil, on top of which was a golden crown. Eugene called his brother, who saw the same thing. They called their father and he looked earnestly at the sky. He could see nothing but the three stars but, because the boys were so excited about it, he sent for his wife.

Madame Barbedette first scolded the boys for telling such stories, then looked hard to see if she could see for herself. She could see nothing, and was very cross when one of the boys told her that the Lady was smiling at her because she had put on her glasses to see better.

Sister Vitaline from the orphanage was called in on the matter, and she brought several of the children from the school. The children could see the Lady; she could not. A little sick boy, passing down the street with his grandmother, stopped and cried out at the lovely Lady, but the grandmother could not see. Babies in their mothers' arms clapped their hands and stared at the sky; and their mothers could not see either. The parish priest was called and he agreed with Sister Vitaline that perhaps it was only to be the children who would see. At his suggestion, they all knelt in the snow and prayed to Our Lady.

The vision lasted for some time, and it changed constantly. The children described each change as it came. The Lady, who had been smiling, became sad, and a red crucifix appeared on her breast. Around her in the sky

a band of deeper blue formed, and a long streamer unrolled at her feet with the message of hope printed on it, letter by letter. *But pray, my children. God will hear you in a short time. My son allows Himself to be moved by compassion.* Then these letters faded, and she took the crucifix in her hands and her face became joyful again. She extended her hands in the position of the Miraculous Medal and then a white cloud, which was seen by all, gradually blotted out the figure in the sky.

The next morning the news reached Pontmain that the Germans had withdrawn at the very time Our Lady faded from the sky. Eleven days later the armistice was signed.

The children of Pontmain all in some way dedicated their lives to the service of Our Lady. Eugene became a secular priest, and Joseph an Oblate of Mary Immaculate. Jeanne-Marie Lebossé became a Holy Family Sister. The parish priest, Father Michael Guerin, lived such a holy life that his cause for beatification has been started.

Several miracles early set the seal of God's presence at Pontmain. These, and the piety of the people who believed that Our Lady had, once more, saved France, gave encouragement to the pilgrims who thronged Pontmain. There is now a great basilica marking the place of the vision, and a statue made according to the description of the children.

#### **OUR LADY OF THE PEAK, LE PUY**

THERE are many legends surrounding the origin of the statue of Our Lady of Le Puy. The shrine itself is one

of the oldest in Christendom, and the statue is even older. One tradition holds that it was carved by the Prophet Jeremias. Another legend claims that it was carved by Arab shepherds, who had heard from the Bethlehem shepherds the story of Our Saviour's birth. Others claim that this was the statue of Our Lady which was once enthroned on one side of the Ka'aba, the sacred stone of the Mohammedans. Most of the accounts seem to agree that it was given to Le Puy by King St. Louis IX, returning from crusade in Egypt, though one legend relates that it was brought back by the only members of the children's crusade who ever reached home.

The present statue is a copy of the original, of Egyptian workmanship; it is carved of cedarwood, wrapped in fine bands of linen in the manner of Egyptian mummies, and covered with tiny gold hieroglyphics. It now wears a mantle and shoes of cloth-of-gold, and many jewels have been set in the headdress. The crown is of peculiar style, like an ancient helmet. Another crown is suspended over the figure, which is seated and holds the Holy Child in her lap. The statue is about two and one-half feet high.

If we know next to nothing about the origins of the statue, the shrine fares better, for it is almost the only one of the old shrines with fairly complete records. It dates from Apostolic times, from the time of George of Vellay, first Bishop of Gaul, who was sent there by St. Peter. The date given for the beginning of the shrine is 46 or 47 A.D., and it was built as a devotional act by a pious widow named Villa. This lady had been ill for some time and was advised by Our Lady in a dream to go to the Carnelian rock, a sharp peak from which the name of

Le Puy was later taken. Villa did as she was told and when she arrived on the peak, fell asleep. She woke up cured of her illness, and then and there resolved to build a church dedicated to Our Lady as a thank-offering.

The bishop and clergy came to view the site on July 11th and found to their great surprise that the ground was covered with a fresh fall of snow. As they stood debating what this sign might mean, a stag dashed out of the woods and, while they watched, traced out with his hoofprints in the snow the outlines of a large church. The church was actually built according to these plans, and when the time came for its consecration, the intervention of heaven was seen again. Angels came and consecrated the church before the bishop could do so. For this reason, and because the neighbors sometimes heard the voices of angels singing there, it was sometimes referred to as "The Church of the Angels."

When the first crusade was called in 1095, the shrine of Our Lady had attained the height of its fame. The Pope himself, Urban II, knelt before Our Lady of Le Puy asking guidance for the launching of the crusade. The first to answer the call of the Pope was Adhemar de Montheil, Bishop of Le Puy, and with him 5,000 men from his diocese. So great was the response that the city of Le Puy was not able to find enough red cloth to make the crusader crosses needed for the gathering army. The departure for the Holy Land was made from the shrine of Our Lady. At the time of this ceremony the Bishop intoned the "Salve Regina," the anthem which was later to become the marching song of the crusaders. As the

people finished singing, "Nobis post hoc exsilium ostende," Adhemar spontaneously added the finishing strophe, "O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria," until then unheard-of. Since the *Salve Regina* was known for a long time as the "anthem of Le Puy," the legend is at least credible.

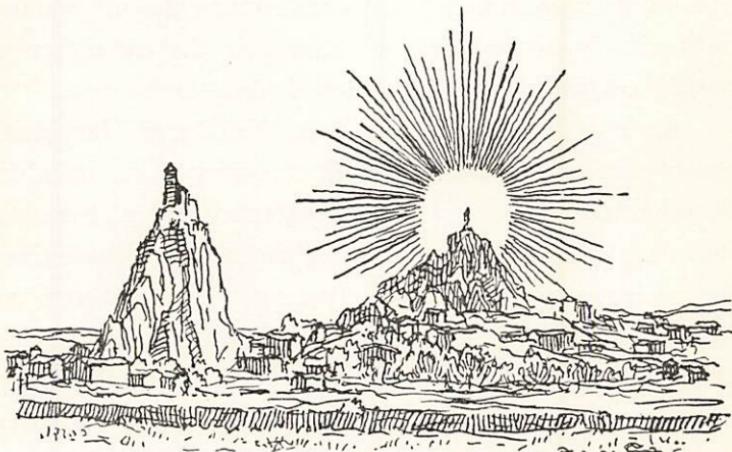
Pilgrims to the shrine included most of the great and the saintly of the Middle Ages. Saints Bernard, Dominic, Anthony of Padua, John Francis Regis and Vincent Ferrer made pilgrimage there; rulers, including Charlemagne and King St. Louis IX and sixteen other French Kings, came there to pray and left rich gifts, as did seven Popes and many who later were elected to the Papacy. Thousands of common folk as well made the pilgrimage to Our Lady of the Peak, which was in the eleventh and twelfth centuries one of the most famous in Europe.

Le Puy is proud of its title as the City of Mary, and boasts that it has never opened its gates to an invader. French Protestants, the Huguenots, tried several times to storm the city, but failed. During the French Revolution, the ancient statue was publicly burned, but as soon as peace had been restored, another statue was carved from memory and reinstated. The building as it stands today is the second church since the beginning of the shrine in Apostolic times. It is oriental in appearance, dark and not architecturally beautiful. It is almost the only church in France that can claim so long a history.

During the Crimean War, the citizens of Le Puy promised Our Lady a statue to be placed on the Carnelian Rock if the Russians were defeated. Shortly after this the

French took part in a surprising victory, and a number of captured Russian cannons were taken over and recast into a statue. This, Our Lady of France, now stands on the high peak overlooking a great plain and a large part of the land of France.

The feast commemorating the statue on the Carnelian Rock is kept on the first Sunday after September 12th. The main feast of the year, however, is the Feast of the Annunciation. There are great pilgrimages at this time and in August. The efforts of several tyrants have failed to stop the great gathering of people from all France and from nearby countries who make this journey of devotion.



# *Belgium*

## OUR LADY OF TONGRES

THE STORY of Our Lady of Tongres goes back to the time of the First Crusade, and concerns a knight by the name of Hector who, becoming blind while on a crusade, was obliged to return home.

On the night of February 1, in the year 1081, while Hector was living in retirement in Tongres, angelic voices were heard in the gardens of his castle, and lights were seen among the shrubs. The next morning his servants found in the garden a lovely statue of Our Lady. He ordered it brought into the castle and had it set up in his private oratory. Here he prayed all night before it, and arranged a procession on the following day in honor of the Royal Visitor. That night the statue disappeared, only to be found on the following morning in the garden. Hector gave orders that it was to be covered with a shelter, and sent word to the bishop of the place to ask what to do about it. The bishop came himself and, convinced that the oratory was the place for the statue, had it placed there. It returned that night, by itself, to the garden.

The bishop offered Mass at the outdoor altar next day, and authorized the knight to build a small chapel there. It became a popular shrine of the neighborhood.

In 1090, King Philip of France, at war with the Flemish, was camped near Tongres. An angel appeared

in sleep to Hector and told him to go to the aid of the King of France. Hector roused his servants and to their terror ordered them to bring out his armor and his sword and arm him for battle. They set out dubiously to accompany him to the camp of the French King.

The armies drew up for battle on the Feast of St. John the Baptist. Hector told his officers to turn him with his face toward Tongres, where his beloved statue was; and in sight of all, he recovered the use of his eyes. Hearing of the miracle, the Flemish fled in terror from an army which seemed to have Our Lady on its side.

After this miracle, Hector spent his entire fortune in enriching the shrine and enlarging it. It soon became known throughout Christendom, and was sought by people in trouble, especially in time of plague. A confraternity was established at this time, enriched with great privileges.

During the French Revolution, a duplicate statue was kept in the church and the real one was hidden in a wall until the trouble was over. The statue was restored to the church as soon as the revolution was past, and was crowned with special Papal commendation in 1881.



# *Holland*

## **OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA, MAASTRICHT**

MAASTRICHT, on the Meuse river, is a long way from the sea, but it qualifies as a seaport because of its commerce. It is a crossroad of three countries—Holland, Belgium and Germany, and the tremendous quantities of goods passing through its port go by boat. The shrine of Our Lady Star of the Sea is so old that no one knows exactly when it came there first. The present church is at least the fourth one built on the same site. The ancient city coat-of-arms is a gold star on a silver background.

The statue now venerated at this, Holland's most important shrine, was brought there in 1400 by a young man who was joining a Franciscan Monastery. The statue is carved of wood, about four feet tall, and is one of the most beautiful in Europe. Our Lady is standing, her head tilted a little to the left; the Infant is on her left arm. Both are crowned. The Madonna wears a blue mantle covered with small stars. In her right hand is a vase with a lily.

There are many stories concerning this statue and its 500 years among the citizens of Maastricht. The shrine was famous before the Reformation, and annual processions were held on two principal feast days, Easter Monday and August 15th. On these occasions all the members of the town guilds, which would be numerous in this commercial center, dressed in their guild costumes and car-

ried their banners. The procession always went by a traditional path called the pilgrim path. At the time of Holland's struggle to be free of Spain, the persecution of the Catholic people began and was not to end for more than two centuries. During this time, as one party or another came into power, the statue would emerge from hiding or be taken away again. She was truly Our Lady of the Underground, and most of the stories recalled today are those concerning her various hiding places and the people who were faithful to her.

At the height of the Protestant persecution the statue, which had been passed from one home to another for safe-keeping, was hidden in a large box in the attic of a convent. To the dismay of the sisters, soldiers were quartered in the convent and they had no time to remove the statue. One of the soldiers, determined to earn the reward for finding the statue, searched until he located the box in the attic. He ripped off the cover with his bayonet and saw the statue inside. He struck at the head with his bayonet and the head tilted to one side (this is how it came to be tilted today, so people say). At the second blow, his right arm withered and fell helpless. Another soldier reported this to the officer, who declared that the soldier was a coward and that he himself would destroy the statue. The same thing happened to the officer. At this, frightened, he begged the sisters to pray for him that his arm would be healed. The superior told him that if he would promise not to tell where the statue was, the sisters would pray. They did, and both soldiers were cured. The statue was taken out by night and hidden in a convent in the country.

Here each morning, very early, a little bird would come to the windowsill of the room where the hidden statue was, and sing. This happened until people began to get suspicious. When the box was removed by boat, the bird circled around it, singing, until the boat had pulled away from the dock. Then it disappeared. The statue was sealed up in a brick wall, and in the course of time the ones who placed it there died, and no one knew where it was.

Many years later, when the times were peaceful again, a poor blacksmith, busy at his work near the brick wall, heard a lovely voice singing. He had been praying that the statue would be found, and the singing seemed a sign to him. They opened the wall and found her there. She was placed in the church, though not her own church of many years before. There the devotion to her quickly revived.

One very important feature of the devotion to Our Lady Star of the Sea had been the pilgrimage way. Catholics longed once again to make the procession as their ancestors had done, but no one knew exactly where the pilgrim way was. One dark winter night an old woman called Mother Anna was praying at the shrine, begging Our Lady to let the pilgrim way be found. As she watched the statue she was surprised to see Our Lady tuck her blue cloak carefully around her Baby and step down from the pedestal. Mother Anna followed her out into the snow. A short way from the church a guard tried to stop the little figure in the blue cloak; she would not stop at his challenge so he thrust at her with his bayonet. It slashed

through the cloak but did not stop her. Instead, the soldier stood rooted to the spot until the little lady had passed, followed by Mother Anna. The old woman had a hard time, the next morning, convincing anyone of her story. But when they looked at the statue carefully they saw that the hem of her skirt was stiff with mud, and there was a slash in her blue mantle where Mother Anna told them the soldier had thrust his bayonet. Since this time the procession has always followed the route marked out by Mother Anna, and the blue cloak has a mended place where the cut was.

On at least one other occasion Our Lady is supposed to have walked around the pilgrim way, but this time she was invisible. It was an Easter Monday, and a bad storm prevented the usual procession. But at the end of the day someone found on the pilgrim path one of the stars from her robe, and when they looked at the robe itself they could see where one was missing. Since that time, no matter what the weather, the pilgrimage is made, with the statue on a beautiful litter. The people do not want her ever to have to walk it alone again.

(It is claimed that no dust ever settles on the face of Mother or Baby, though it falls all around, and the statue has never faded nor been injured by worms or dampness as most wooden statues would be.) Today this is a famous pilgrim place, and thousands of the faithful go each year to pay their respects to the lovely statue. Hundreds of cures have been reported, through the years, by those who prayed here.

Some years ago the statue was brought back to her own church, rebuilt on the old site. The bells in the tower started ringing of themselves when the procession came in sight, as though the angels were happy to see her home again.



# *Germany*

## THE DEAR LADY OF ALTOTTING, BAVARIA

THE STRANGE little eight-sided chapel of Our Lady at Altötting is one of the oldest churches still in use. It was built in the year 696 under the direction of St. Rupert, and most of the original chapel is still standing.

The church around this chapel was burned by the Hungarians in the tenth century. At that time everything was lost but the statue and the stone parts of the building. These were later enlarged to accommodate the immense crowds of pilgrims, and enriched with fine gifts by people who had received favors there. The altar is made almost entirely of silver.

The statue of Our Lady venerated at Altötting is quite small, and looks very old. It is kept robed in costly silks in black and white, except on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, when it is draped in black veils. Originally it was of painted wood. Our Lady now wears a costly crown, as does her Son, and she holds a scepter of jeweled lilies. Both faces are blackened with age and the smoke of many candles.

Many lamps are kept constantly burning around the statue. Most of them are offerings of people who have been cured here, or who have received some other favor. There is a silver statue of a young prince who was cured of a serious illness in 1737, and a special lamp given

by Pope Pius IX. The testimonials are not all from wealthy people; many are from the poor and humble, who found their Dear Mother of Altötting gracious to their needs.



Pilgrimages begin in May and last all summer until the weather gets cold. Thousands come, mostly on foot, to pray at the shrine of their Dear Mother. Twice a year the statue is taken down for the blessing of rosaries, and many pilgrims try to arrive at that time.

Altötting is a deeply religious community. On St. Stephen's Day, people bring their horses and colts to the marketplace outside the shrine, and the young colts are blessed with a special ceremony. On the eve of the Epiphany, the priest goes through the village and blesses all the houses, signing the doors with the initials of the three wise men.

Various attempts were made to stop the pilgrimages at Altötting, during the political troubles of the past fifty years. This old church, built from the stones of a pagan temple still older, stands firm and unafraid against the

pagan ideas of today, and is still the heart of Catholic devotion in Southern Germany.

#### **OUR LADY CONSOLER OF THE AFFLICTED, KEVELAER**

THIS SHRINE of Our Lady is near Dusseldorf, not far from the Dutch border. It has become famous with the people of both Holland and Germany as a place of healing, especially for sick children.

In December 1641, a trader by the name of Buschmann was crossing a desolate moor where once a prosperous city had stood. Nothing was left but ruins, and he hurried his horse past the sorry spot. He stopped for a few minutes to say a prayer at a wayside shrine for the citizens who had died in the destruction of the city, and was amazed to hear a sweet voice say to him, "You will build a sanctuary in my honor in this place." Since there was no one in sight and the place was wild and lonely, he hurried on home and said nothing about it to his wife. On two later occasions the same thing happened. Convinced now that God wanted him to do something about it, he confided the matter to his wife and instructed her to start saving a few pennies a day—for they were not wealthy people by any means—so that they could put up a modest shrine.

Shortly after this his wife was awakened at night by a brilliant light in her room. She saw in the light a small sanctuary with a picture of Our Lady. She recalled having seen the picture before, when some roving soldiers had tried to sell it to her; it was, she thought, a page cut

from a prayerbook, and she had not had the price they asked for it. Strangely enough, her husband did not believe her story until the neighbors asked him what bright light had been glowing around his house in the middle of the night. Then, talking it over, the couple decided to try to find the soldiers and buy the picture. This they did after a lot of trouble.

The picture did not really look worth the trouble; it was very small and crude, printed in black on prayer-book paper. It was a poor copy of Our Lady Consolation of the Afflicted at Luxembourg. However, the pious couple had the picture mounted and framed. They were hardly prepared for what followed.

First of all a group of Carmelite Sisters heard about the picture and asked if they might keep it overnight. How people all over the neighborhood heard about it is not quite clear, but the crowds began to gather so closely about the home of the Buschmanns that in self-defense they had the picture carried to the church of the Capuchins. The crowds gathered here, and soon overran the church, so that the Capuchins urged the man to hurry with his shrine and even offered to help him build it. Finally, after several weeks of strain, the picture was settled in its own little shrine. Here, enthroned in its own niche, the little picture seemed to draw everyone to it.

The first miracle was the cure of a little four-year-old girl who had been born blind; she came away from the shrine with normal sight. A little boy, mute, regained his speech. Several crippled children from Holland were cured. Like a spring wind bringing flowers wherever it

blew, the news flew from house to house that Our Lady of Kevelaer was merciful to crippled and sick children.

In 1647 the bishop, attracted by the great enthusiasm of the people and the strange things he heard about the shrine, made a thorough investigation and pronounced it truly a place of grace. A big new shrine was begun and reached completion a few years later. This church, suppressed during political troubles, was replaced in 1883 by a splendid new church built of stone sent from Rome by Pope Pius IX. It is this church which one sees today.



At the time of the building of the first church, a lovely statue of Our Lady was secured and placed over the high altar. It is a close copy of Our Lady of Luxembourg, the original of the picture. This, and many artistic decorations in the church, make it a place of beauty. But the people who come there to pray center their attention on the quaint little picture which was the beginning of all this grandeur: a tiny, crude print set in a frame of great value. Pilgrims come in single file up a narrow

stair to see this little print and to marvel at the means Our Lady uses for her work in this world.

The statue was crowned solemnly in 1892. Processions and pilgrimages are still plentiful at this shrine, in spite of the terrible political upheavals of recent years in Germany. During the time when Holland forbade public processions, the Dutch people went across the border to Our Lady of Kevelaer and held their pilgrimages there. *(Thus Our Lady of Kevelaer has in many ways helped and healed her children of many nations.)*

# Austria

## OUR LADY OF MARIAZELL, STYRIA

THE SHRINE of Our Lady at Mariazell, the National Shrine of Austria, is about 85 miles from Vienna. Its beginning is fairly well dated as 1157, at which time five Benedictine missionaries had been sent out to the surrounding country. One lost his way in the woods near Gratz, and night found him facing a high bare rock which he could neither climb nor go around. He carried with him a wooden statue of Our Lady about two feet high which he intended to use in his missionary labors. This he placed on a log while he prayed to Our Lady for direction. The high black rock suddenly split in two and light shone forth from its severed edges. He realized that Our Lady had led him there and that she wished to be honored in this place.

At first he built only a tiny hermitage, with a tree-stump for a pedestal to hold the statue. More than a hundred years later, a neighboring prince and his wife, both seriously ill, were told in a dream to go to the hermitage and pray to Our Lady for a cure. Being cured, they built a church as a thanks-offering. In 1363, Ludwig, King of Hungary, added to this church in thanksgiving for a miraculous escape from the Turks. By 1699 the church had been enlarged still more and was visited by up to 370,000 pilgrims a year. Its popularity as a pil-

grimage place was so great that a later emperor, who had ruthlessly suppressed all the monasteries, refused to strip the sanctuary of Mariazell of its many treasures.

The statue, carved of wood, is seated. Our Lady's dress was originally white with gold patterns, the mantle blue, and she wore a white linen veil. The Babe holds an apple, His mother, a pear. Our Lady looks out and beyond the Infant with a regal and somewhat sorrowful expression. The statue is now completely robed in costly materials.



At the feet of Our Lady at Mariazell, patroness of Styria, four warring peoples come to pray—Germans, Slavs, Hungarians, and Bohemians.

Wars, invasions and even a disastrous fire that destroyed the entire church have never scarred the statue nor stopped the pilgrimages to Mariazell.

## OUR LADY OF THE BOWED HEAD, VIENNA

THE PICTURE of Our Lady of the Bowed Head now venerated in Vienna was found under strange circumstances in Rome in the seventeenth century. It has traveled far since then and played a part in the fortunes of men of several nations.

In 1610, at the Carmelite monastery of Santa Maria Della Scala in Rome, the Prior, Dominic, went with a lantern to inspect a building he had just purchased. When looking through the cellar he saw a pile of rubbish and passed it by, since it was late and he was in a hurry. However, something drew him back to the rubbish pile and made him search in it until he found what had drawn him—a picture of Our Lady.

The Prior took the picture to his room and set about dusting it with the only thing at hand—his handkerchief. He apologized to Our Lady for such undignified treatment, and was amazed to hear her speak to him, saying, *“Do not be afraid, my son, your desire will be granted because of your love for me and my Son. I will give the faithful who venerate me while honoring this picture all that they ask for, and will grant them many graces. In a special way I will fulfill the prayers addressed to me for the relief of the souls in Purgatory.”* Then the Lady of the picture smiled and bowed her head—and the head remained bowed, as though to remind the Prior that it had really happened.

Naturally a great devotion grew up around the picture, led by the Prior, who could never forget her favor

to him. After the death of the Prior, however, the story was remembered by few. The picture changed hands several times, and traveled from one place to another. It had a peculiar charm about it, though it was not what could be called a beautiful picture, and it brought peace to those who prayed before it. Finally the picture arrived in Vienna where it was set up in a church. Here it gradually drew around it many people who found happiness in praying before it.

One of the devout clients of Our Lady of the Bowed Head was the Emperor Ferdinand II. During the wars with Sweden he had the picture carried in procession, and credited it with victory. He and his Queen had the picture decorated with pearls, and exhorted all to pray to her. Our Lady showed her gratitude for their reverence by saving the life of the Emperor as he was crossing the Danube in a storm.

Several times in the wars against the Turks, Our Lady of the Bowed Head played her part. She spoke from the picture in 1633, and assured the faithful that she would guard Austria. In 1683 the Turks attacked Vienna. The monastery where the picture was honored was burned. After the Christian victory, the monastery was rebuilt and the picture restored.

For more than a hundred years the monastery, confiscated by a later emperor, was deserted, and the devotion nearly forgotten. However, when it was returned to the Church in 1901, someone recalled the story and the devotion was restored. In 1931 the picture was honored with a Papal coronation. During the second World War more

than 300 bombs fell in the vicinity of the monastery, many in the square immediately in front of it. No direct damage was done to the monastery, and none at all to the picture.

#### **OUR LADY OF MERCY, ABSAM**

THIS SHRINE of Our Lady of Mercy is probably the only one in the world where Our Lady's image is in glass. It dates from the late eighteenth century.

On a dark snowy day, January 17, 1797, Rosina Bucher, a young girl of the village of Absam near Innsbruck, was sitting by the window sewing. It was between three and four in the afternoon and the light was just beginning to fade. Rosina looked up and saw a face in the window glass. She looked closely, not sure of what she saw, and finally called her mother. Others, including the parish priest, were called in to observe the strange happening. All agreed that it was a face, the face of the Mother of Sorrows. It was turned slightly, and there was a very sad expression on it.

The window was made up of several small panes of glass quite dark in color. They removed the pane of glass with the picture on it, which was on the inside of the double window. After they had examined the glass, it was sent to experts in painting and glasswork. Here it was discovered that the face disappeared when water was put on the glass, but came back again as soon as the glass was dry. They analyzed it chemically, and could not discover by what process the picture had been placed there.

Rosina's mother thought it was an omen of trouble.

The parish priest, on the contrary, felt that Our Lady's blessing must rest on this house. He asked her to let him have the picture for the Church. Here it soon became a popular shrine.

Our Lady of Absam has since become a place of pilgrimage. Many miracles have been recorded from the pilgrims who prayed there.

The picture is quite small, the size of a small pane of glass and not at all pretty.



# Poland

## OUR LADY OF CZESTOCHOWA

“In tender love for the gentle Mother of God, no nation surpasses you and few are your equals. May this merciful Virgin look down propitiously upon the people of Poland who have recourse to her, and be their strong defense. . . . their glory and their crown.” *Pius XII to the Polish people.*

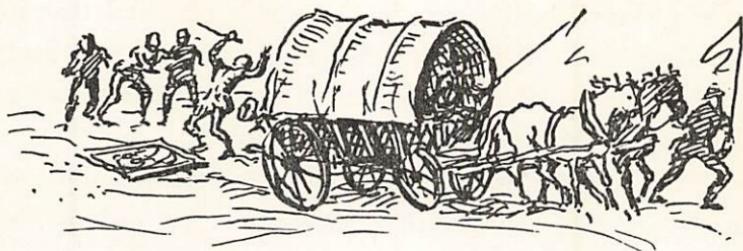
The shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa on Jasna Gora (Bright Mountain) is not the only shrine of Our Lady in Poland, but it is the chief one and the best loved. Every one in Poland, rich or poor, dreams of making a pilgrimage, at least once in a lifetime, to this famous shrine which has played such a part in the history of their country.

The origins of the picture of Our Lady of Czestochowa itself are entwined with legends. It most certainly is painted on cypress wood, possibly a tabletop. Tradition relates that it was a table made by St. Joseph, and that the picture was painted by St. Luke during the lifetime of Our Lady, and left in the house of St. John at Ephesus after her Assumption, and that it remained here until the memorable journey of St. Helena, who came seeking holy relics in the fourth century. It is presumed that St. Helena’s son, the Emperor Constantine, built for this pic-

ture a church of its own in Constantinople, and that it remained there until the ninth century, when it was sent on the first step of a long journey around Central Europe that would end, 500 years later, in Poland.

Early in the fourteenth century, the picture appears in the charge of a Polish Prince who was leading his troops against the Mongols. Having prayed to Our Lady to help him, he beheld the first of many tremendous miracles in favor of Poland: a great darkness covered the Mongol army, and in their terror they fought their own troops and withdrew in defeat. The Prince was informed in a dream that Our Lady wished the picture honored at Jasna Gora. It was brought there and a church and monastery built in its honor.

In 1430 the monastery was attacked by a group of religious bandits. They plundered the sanctuary, which was richly decorated, and took the miraculous picture. However, as they were going through the village of Czestochowa with the loot in a wagon, the horses stopped and could not be forced to move. Thinking that the picture was at fault, they threw it from the wagon, breaking it as it fell. One of the soldiers struck at it with his sword, leaving two deep gashes in the face of the Madonna. As he struck the third time, he fell to the ground and died in agony. His companions, terrified, fled, and someone gathered up the precious pieces and returned them to the monastery. Several times since then, artists have attempted to repair the cuts in Our Lady's face. No matter what combination of paint is used, the scars always show.



Enriched by thousands of visitors, many of them noble, the sanctuary at Czestochowa became a robber's prize, and in 1655 the Swedish troops attacked the monastery with glowing visions of the priceless loot. They had more than 12,000 men and several cannons, and the defenders were less than 300. However, they had reckoned without Our Lady. The Swedish were completely and bitterly defeated by the valiant handful of men. A few years after this, John Sobieski, on his way to relieve the Turkish siege of Vienna, stopped at Jasna Gora to beg victory for the Christian troops. Our Lady of the Bright Mountain became the symbol, to the Polish people and to all Christians, of the victorious Queen of Heaven, who is "greater than an army in battle array." The picture has been crowned twice, the first time in 1717, as a special commemoration of the victory of Vienna. In 1905 the crowns were stolen (they have never been recovered) and were replaced by Pope St. Pius X a few years later.

The miracles of Our Lady have continued up to the present day. In 1920, on the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, the Russian army stood at the Vistula River, ready to invade Warsaw. The Polish people had recourse, as always, to Our Lady of Jasna Gora. Over the city of

Warsaw appeared an image of Our Lady. The Russians drew back and spared Warsaw.

Under the persecution of first the German, then the Communist, invaders, Our Lady has held her people together. Hitler forbade pilgrimages, but in 1945 there were a half-million pilgrims, and in 1946, 1,550,000 appeared to rededicate themselves to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and to pray for the conversion of Russia. In 1948, when the tide of battle had changed and it was the Russian army occupying Poland, more than 800,000 came at one time to a mass demonstration of faith on the Feast of the Assumption. Thousands of Communist soldiers patrolled the streets of Czestochowa, but they could not stop the great demonstration of faith.

Many stories have come out of the prisons and refugee camps, testifying to the care of Our Lady for her scattered Polish children. There is the story of the "Soup-bone Madonna" carved by a half-starved Polish prisoner in a concentration camp. There is the story of the Polish soldiers who had escaped to England, and joined the Allied army there. One of the officers overheard an English soldier talking about the old English shrine of Walsingham. He inquired about it and then organized his group of exiles, strangers in the land, into a pilgrimage to the English Virgin. They marched through the English countryside behind their smuggled banner of the Black Virgin of Czestochowa, singing Polish hymns; and in the tiny chapel at Walsingham resolved that they would fight until once more her shrine was free on Bright Mountain.

The picture of Czestochowa is often called The Black

Madonna because the faces and hands of Mother and Babe are of a dark bronze color. The picture is fairly large: three and one-half feet by five feet. It is set now in a beautiful altar of gold, silver and ebony. The colors of the picture have lasted well through the centuries. The picture and sanctuary have been enriched by many jewels.

At the place in the road where the picture was thrown from the wagon in the fifteenth century, a spring of water has been flowing ever since. It is reputedly miraculous water and many cures have been attributed to its use. A church has been erected over the spring and it, as well as the church on the hill, is a pilgrimage place.

One feast is not enough for such a dearly-loved patroness; the main day at Bright Mountain is the Feast of the Assumption. The Feast of the picture itself is celebrated on August 26th. The Feast of Our Lady, Queen of the Crown of Poland, is celebrated on May 3rd. Poland, alone of all countries, has the privilege of adding to the Litany of Loreto the invocation, "Queen of Poland, Pray for Us."

The shrine is set on top of a hill, and its high steeple can be seen from miles away. The faithful gather there long before dawn to be on time when the doors open, and pray before the large outdoor copy of the picture until they can go indoors. Here, at 6 o'clock, trumpets blow a greeting as a veil is pulled away and the dearly-loved picture is revealed to the praying people.

No one knows, now, exactly what is happening behind the Iron Curtain, but it is certain that Our Lady will watch over her faithful people.

### OUR LADY OF POCSZAJOW

THIS ANCIENT SHRINE of Our Lady had its beginning with two Basilian monks who lived in a cave on Mount Pocszajow. One of them in a vision saw Our Lady on top of



the mountain, and understood that he should go there and look for her footprint. He found the footprint in the rock, filled with fresh water. A neighboring shepherd claimed that he had had the same vision and seen the same thing. There are many uncertainties about this part of the story. But it is sure that there were many cures of sick people who came there to pray and drink the water.

Some time after this a visiting bishop traveled through Poland and was kindly received by a nobleman, H. Von Kosenki, who lived near the hermit's cave. The bishop gave to Madam Kosenki a picture of Our Lady. It was painted on cedar, about a foot high, and represented Our Lady with the Holy Child on her right arm. Madam Kosenki honored the picture as a family shrine. One day one of her maids saw the picture surrounded by

a glowing light. Shortly after this a blind relative praying before it received his sight.

Realizing that the picture should be placed where it would receive public veneration, Madam Kosenki had it taken to the church of the Basilian monks and endowed a convent there. After her death all her property went to a Lutheran relative, whose first act was to plunder the church and convent. He took the altar vessels and vestments home to his wife and also the little picture that had been so loved by Madam Kosenki. As a punishment for their sacrilege, his wife became possessed and could not be cured until the picture had been returned to the church.

In 1648 a new and larger church was built; this was later destroyed, and a larger church replaced it. Probably because of the continual state of war, and the many separate persecutions, the original legends have become badly confused. The picture remained, at least up to the First World War, and received the honors of Papal coronation.

# *Lithuania*

## OUR LADY OF SILUVA

THE LEGEND of the Lady of Siluva has one feature which seems to make it unique among the apparitions of Our Blessed Mother; on this occasion, one of the seers was no less than the local Lutheran Minister.

Lithuania in the early sixteenth century was involved in war on two fronts: with Russia and with Sweden. Much of the country had gone over to Protestantism, and the few peasants who had preserved the old faith had a hard time existing. A group of children of this persecuted class of people were the first to meet the lovely Lady of the Rock.

They were shepherds, and were quietly tending their flocks when the sound of sobbing led them to look and see if one of their companions might have fallen and hurt herself. (They found that the sobbing came from a dazzlingly beautiful young Woman who sat on a large rock, holding a sleeping Baby in her arms. She was dressed all in white and her hair hung loose over her shoulders. She was crying so hard that the children were terrified and fled as soon as they could get their flocks moving.)

Once home, they related what they had seen. Their tale was received with varying degrees of belief, but one of the principal scoffers was the local minister. He scolded the people for taking the children's story seriously, and

when he found that a number of the grown people intended to go with the children to the pasture next day, he went with them, in order to persuade them not to be so foolish.



Once arrived at the rock, what was his terror to behold exactly what the children had said they saw—a lovely Lady in white, weeping bitterly. Since the people looked to him to say or do something about it, he addressed her, much against his will, and asked her why she was weeping and what she was doing there.

The Lady replied that formerly her dearly loved Son had been worshipped on that very spot, and that now the

place was given over to the plow and the flocks. The minister did not know what she meant, and all felt uneasy about it, so they went home. No one spoke of anything else.

Very soon the village chatter reached the ears of an old man who was completely blind. In great excitement, he had someone lead him to the priest in a nearby village and he told him that the Lady was right, there *had* been a church there once, and that some of its possessions were still buried there. The priest, either not believing him or not wanting trouble, paid no heed to his tale. However, the old man got another friend to lead him to the field. He sat down near the rock and directed the friend to dig. When it became apparent that something was buried there, the priest was sent for. They dug up an old oak chest full of altar plate, and a picture of the Blessed Virgin. Legend relates that the blind man received his sight when he touched the picture of Our Lady. The record buried in the *chest* indicated that a church had been built there in 1457.

After some difficulty the land was once more procured for the Church, and a shrine was built there. The picture found in the chest was enthroned, and each year more than 100,000 people made pilgrimage to the tiny village of the Weeping Virgin.

# Russia

## OUR LADY OF VLADIMIR, KIEFF-MOSCOW

THIS LITTLE icon, painted on a corner-piece of plaster, was last heard of in the museum in Leningrad. It is unlikely that it can ever be positively identified again as the original "Lady of Vladimir," a title to which there are at least two likely claimants.

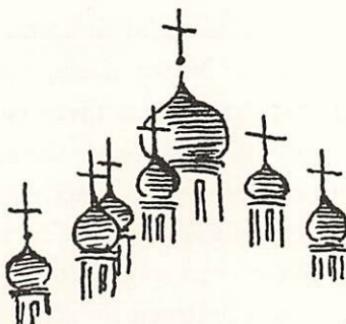
Kieff on the banks of the Dneiper was the first resting-place of the famous icon. Here, according to legend, St. Andrew the Apostle had once stopped on his way from Constantinople to Rome. Waking in the morning to the sight of the heights of Kieff, he was moved to prophecy: "See you those hills? For on those hills shall hereafter shine forth the grace of God." However, it was nearly a thousand years—the year 1010, to be exact—before the Russian Prince Vladimir was baptized at Kieff with all his people, and the teachings of the Gospel began to go out from the heights that had so impressed the Apostle.

Vladimir sent to Kherson for a picture of Our Lady which was, according to one legend, painted by Constantine and according to another, commissioned by him, which seems more likely. Vladimir endowed a monastery in Petchersk to house the famous icon and here it remained until the fifteenth century. In 1467 Ivan III, Grand Duke of Moscow, built the Church of the Assumption in the Kremlin as a memorial of his marriage. As a

crowning jewel of his new church he demanded the miracle-working "Lady of Vladimir" from Kieff.

The aged Metropolitan of Kieff was both grieved and frightened at the demand. The people of the city rose in protest, in spite of the danger of opposing the tyrannical Duke. They did not want to lose their dearest treasure, although it was useless to hope for mercy from the rulers of a ruthless age. At this juncture, the Blessed Virgin appeared in sleep to the Metropolitan and told him to release the picture because she would personally see to it that it was replaced. He gave the icon to the agents of the Duke of Moscow on the following morning, and returned to the church to find that another picture exactly like it had mysteriously appeared in the place of the one he had given away.

Kieff and Moscow were still vigorously disputing, up to fifty years ago, the 400-year-old question of which city had the original and which had the one placed there by the Blessed Virgin. Now both Petchersk monastery in Kieff and Troitza monastery in Moscow have had to abandon the custody of the beloved icons and both are lost.



# *Italy*

## THE HOLY HOUSE OF LORETO

THE HOLY HOUSE of Loreto and its legend have caused a great deal of argument in the past 600 years. It is today one of the most highly indulged shrines in the world, and it still stands as an insoluble mystery to much of the world.

In (1291) some shepherds employed near Tersatto in the hills of Dalmatia found a small cottage in a field where there had been no cottage the night before. They examined it and found nothing extraordinary about it except that it contained a very beautiful cross and a statue of the Blessed Virgin. They went to the parish priest with the story. He had been warned in a dream that the House of the Holy Family was to come from Palestine and rest itself in the neighborhood. Uneasy, he consulted the civil authorities and they sent someone to Palestine to see what he could find out. He found that the Holy House was no longer there, though there was positive evidence that it had been there only a short time before. He measured the place where the house had stood; the measurements corresponded exactly to the measurements of the cottage in the field at Tersatto. Even the materials of the house corresponded: limestone, mortar, and cedar-wood. It was believed by all the neighbors that

the cottage in question was none other than the Holy House of Nazareth.

Some three years after this, the faithful of this region were shocked and saddened to find that the house was gone. It appeared later at Recanati. It remained here for a time, then disappeared again. In 1294 the little house appeared at Loreto, on the other side of the Adriatic. Here it was to be seen in several places successively; in one, robbers in the nearby woods were thought to have been the evil influence that sent it away. In the second place, two brothers quarreled bitterly near the site, and the little house left that spot also. It finally settled on a place near the road near Loreto. Here, for more than 600 years, it has remained.

Pilgrimages began almost immediately after the facts of the measurements became known. Many people still argued, quite reasonably, that it was impossible for a house to simply fly from one place to another, and condemned the whole story as a fantasy of the wildest sort. Yet no one could explain the evidence. Many popes and saints have testified to the reality of the Holy relic, and the Church has honored the transfer of the house by a special feast day on December 10. All possible scientific tests have been used to determine what sort of materials were used; modern tests which no one questions in other cases have proved beyond any doubt the two things on which the story of the translation is based: first, that the materials are identical with those used in the holy house at Nazareth, as fragments are still to be seen in the foundations there. Secondly, the house of Loreto shows that it

has never been taken apart and rebuilt; that it rests on no foundations and therefore defies all the rules by lasting for so many years; and that it is constructed in materials and manner that are completely foreign to Loreto but native to Palestine of 1900 years ago.

To the thousands of pilgrims who come every year to pray at this shrine, these scientific arguments mean little or nothing. They are devoutly concerned with seeing the little holy house, The Holiest House on Earth, the place of the Incarnation and the home of Christ and Our Lady on earth. It is a small, poor cottage with (originally) only one door, one window, and a small fireplace. At the time when the great basilica of Our Lady of Loreto was being built, the original door was closed up and two other doors opened in the sides of the cottage so that the pilgrims might walk through it. At this time, too, a niche was placed above the fireplace and the statue of Our Lady was set there in a frame radiant with jewels.

The statue enthroned at Loreto at the present is a copy, since the original was accidentally destroyed in 1921. This one is carved of cedar from a tree grown in the Vatican gardens, and is a close copy of the first one which was made of Cedar of Lebanon. It is about three feet high and the Holy Child is about one and a half feet high. Both are clothed, and their robes are covered with jewels left by grateful people.

One of the most famous treasures of the Loreto sanctuary is the fortune in pearls that surrounds the statue. Many years ago, pearl fishermen on the Adriatic prayed to Our Lady for a good harvest of pearls. In the first net

to be raised was a large, luminous pearl with an image of the Madonna on it. Since then, all the finest pearls go by common consent to the shrine.

Our Lady of Loreto made a journey by herself, as prisoner of the French Commune in 1797. She was taken to Paris and exhibited as a curiosity and of course robbed of her jewels. Napoleon restored her to Loreto after she had been devoutly exhibited at Notre Dame in Paris so that the French people might make reparation for the insult. After the accident which destroyed the first figure, the new one was made under the watchful care of Pope Pius XI. Before returning to Loreto, she was escorted in procession through the streets of Rome, and magnificent crowns placed on the heads of Mother and Babe.

The Holy House of Loreto defies the laws of gravity as well as a number of other well-known laws. The walls not only have no foundation, but in some places they do not even rest on the ground; there is the space of a hand's thickness between the wall and any possible support. In spite of the questions that keep people busily studying its history and possible explanation, pilgrims come each year by the thousands, and weep with joy to see with their own eyes the house where the Word was made flesh that He might dwell among us.

#### **OUR LADY OF GALLORO, ROME**

THE LITTLE tiled picture of Our Lady, found in 1621 at Galloro, marked the site of an older church built there in

her honor and long since ruined, probably during one of the periodic invasions by foreign troops.

The tile was discovered by a small boy named Santi Bevilacqua, who was an orphan and lived with his uncle at L'Ariccia. Santi had been sent to watch the sheep, and was in the nearby brambles picking berries for his lunch when he saw a low stone wall half-hidden in the brush and decided to investigate. He followed the wall and at one



point fell off into the brambles. When he picked himself up, he saw a picture of the Madonna painted on the wall. Being a pious child, he knelt and said a prayer; then, the following day, he returned with a bouquet of flowers.

Soon a number of his friends were coming with him to the Madonna in the woods. They brought flowers and sang hymns as they went along. This did not impress the neighbors, who feared for their fruit with so many children passing by. Finally, the children set about making a path that would let them into the brambles by an easier way, and in the course of their construction, unwisely set

fire to the brush. Quite a fire ensued, and they were forbidden to go any more to the woods to play.

Soon after this, Santi was playing in his uncle's carpenter shop, and went to sleep in a corner near a pile of lumber. The lumber fell on him as he slept, and he awoke only in time to cry out to the Madonna of the woods to save him. His frightened uncle, unpiling the lumber, discovered the boy unhurt and demanded to know who had saved him. The boy told him again about the Madonna at Galloro. The uncle made inquiries, and found that there was indeed a wall there which had once formed part of a church. There was an attractive little tile on one side of it, showing the Madonna. He set about rebuilding the church.

Research revealed that the tile had been painted by a monk of Grotta Ferrata and that the church had been a pious venture of a good woman. There had been a dispute over the ownership of the land, and the church was abandoned. The years had converted the site into a wilderness again.

Santi's uncle, with great perseverance and with the help of the Madonna, got the funds together and started the rebuilding of the church. Others helped, and in time a chapel was built, and also a home for priests. Santi went there to live, so that he could serve the Masses at the shrine.

By 1633, there were fifteen Masses said daily, and the pilgrims were coming in such droves that a fine new church had to be built. The site was nearby but it required the moving of the picture, which was set into the stone wall. It required much skill and prayer to move the pic-

ture without damage, but it was finally accomplished by a devout group of workmen, chanting litanies as they worked.

Plague and cholera both passed by Galloro when people prayed at the shrine of Our Lady. These and other miracles endeared her to the people, and it is still a place of pilgrimage.

#### **OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS, TURIN**

THE TITLE Mary, Help of Christians, was bestowed on Our Lady by Pope St. Pius V after the sea victory of Lepanto in the sixteenth century. At this time, too, the Pope placed this petition in the Litany of Loreto. However, there was not any special shrine built to commemorate the Rosary Victory. It was left to none other than Don Bosco, the amiable Saint of the nineteenth century, to build a major shrine by this title and to tie it in, not only with the past, but with the future.

The church was begun in 1863 with the sum of .08¢. Don Bosco never revealed all that Our Lady had told him in the several visions that preceded this, but he did reveal that she had asked him to build a great shrine and that it would be a source of grace to all who came there to pray. The saints do not ask as many questions as other people do; he simply got the permission, hunted up an architect, and began. A special mention must be made of the architect who was willing, in the coldly realistic nineteenth century, to begin a church on .08¢. He said when the work was finished that he had been paid every cent owing

to him, but in the beginning, confronted by a man whom many people said was completely mad, he must have had real faith to even listen to him.

Like everything else accomplished by the great Saint of Turin, the building was beset with difficulties. No one could understand why he insisted upon naming it for Our Lady Help of Christians; even his own fellow priests thought it was a strange name. The money to pay for the huge project did not come in by the thousands of dollars, or even by the hundreds, but by the penny. Every stone in the building, every bit of decoration, was a gift of love and sacrifice from some grateful person who had benefited from Our Lady's help. The completed building is a testimonial of miracles and a shrine of beauty fit to stand with the world's finest.

The curious thing about Don Bosco's shrine to Our Lady, and the one that should cause us thought, is the story of the right-hand tower. There is a large central dome, and on each side of it a smaller one. On top of the left-hand one is an angel holding a banner on which is printed the word *Lepanto*. The right-hand dome is built the same, but its decoration, an angel offering a crown to Our Lady, is not labelled. One who saw the original sketches of the church, drawn out in Don Bosco's own hand, saw something that the Saint had never told. There was a label on the right-hand tower, and a date 19.., indicating that at some time in this warring century there will be a victory of Our Lady over evil to correspond with Lepanto. Our Lady often tells her secrets to the saints,

and apparently Don Bosco knew the name and the place, and thought it better not to reveal what he knew.

Don Bosco's church was raised to the rank of a basilica by Pope St. Pius X.

#### OUR LADY OF THE SNOWS, ROME

THE Church of St. Mary Major is not only one of the oldest churches in Christendom, but is also one of the most highly privileged. In the long history of the Church it has played a part in almost every important event that took place in Rome. It has been the best-loved church of many Popes, including Pope Pius XII, who offered both his first Mass and his Golden Jubilee Mass on the altar of St. Mary of the Snows in the Church of St. Mary Major.

The church was built in the third century, according to a well-documented legend, by a pious and wealthy couple who had no children. They had prayed to Our Lady to ask her what to do with their vast fortune, and she replied by appearing to them in a dream and showing them the plans for a great church. The Pope had the same dream, and was instructed to go to the top of the Esquiline Hill on the following morning and he would find a sign that his dream was really true. The following day the wealthy couple and the Pope both went to the Esquiline Hill and found that it was covered with snow. The date was the 5th of August, so the fall of snow was plainly miraculous. It traced out the outlines of a large church. As soon as the outlines had been marked, the snow melted

away. The couple, according to the tradition, immediately gave over their fortune to the building of the church.

The favorite of many popes and saints, this church soon became the storehouse of unusual treasures and relics. One of the best-loved is the piece of the holy Crib in which the Infant Jesus was laid at Bethlehem, brought back by St. Helena from the Holy Land in the fourth century. From this precious relic, the church is sometimes called St. Mary's of the Crib.

A still more famous relic in St. Mary Major is the picture called "Salvation of the Roman People," which Pope Pius XII crowned in solemn ceremony at the end of the Marian year. This ancient picture has been in St. Mary Major for so long that no one can be quite certain where it came from in the first place. The legends insist that it was painted by St. Luke; it could have been, but even if it was not, it is one of the oldest pictures we have of Our Blessed Lady. The picture had been crowned twice before the present century. It has been honored many times, and for good reason.

In 593 the city of Rome was in mourning; the plague had struck the city and thousands were dead or dying. The previous Pope had died of it, and Pope St. Gregory the Great led his people in praying that the terrible scourge would stop. He led the people of Rome in a great procession, in which this picture of Our Lady was carried as they begged her help. As the procession reached the bridge across the Tiber, the Pope heard angel voices singing, "O Queen of Heaven Rejoice," the Easter hymn of Our Lady. Over the rooftops appeared a vision of St. Michael (who

was patron of health and of healing); he put his long sword into its scabbard, and the Pope took these signs to mean that the epidemic was at an end. The plague died out from that day, and Rome was saved.

In the ninth century a great fire started in Rome, and was sweeping through the city. Pope Leo ordered that the picture be brought out into the streets. Prayers were said to Our Lady and once more she came to the help of the Roman people. In 1571, when the Turks threatened all Christendom, Pope St. Pius V prayed in the chapel of St. Mary Major for the victory of Lepanto. In 1944 when the danger was from bombing, the Roman people once more prayed for her help, and the city was preserved. A public procession of thanksgiving took place in 1949 when the picture was brought to St. Peter's, and a mass celebrated on the Papal altar in its honor.

There have been so many miracles connected with this church that it would take a lifetime to study them all. Many of them are shown in paintings and decorations in the church. There is a painting of a great storm at sea, where Cardinal Peter Colonna was saved by Our Lady of St. Mary Major. One of the bells of the basilica was for many years rung every night at two o'clock, in memory of a noble traveler who was lost and who asked her help. He was guided by the ringing of the bell, which he recognized; the bell was rung afterward to commemorate this.

The 5th of August, Feast of Our Lady of the Snows, is a solemn feast of thanksgiving at St. Mary Major. One of the features that visitors enjoy is the shower of white blossoms that flutter down from the roof in memory of the fall of snow.

# *Canary Islands*

## **OUR LADY OF THE CANDLEMASS, TENERIFE**

THE CANARY ISLANDS are called "the Fortunate Isles" and were inhabited long before Christianity reached them. The natives of the islands had a tradition from ancient times that some day white men would come to them "in great white birds," which they recognized in the sailing ships that arrived in the sixteenth century. They presented the newcomers with a mystery that no one has ever solved, the presence on the islands of a statue of Our Lady.

In the year 1400, more than a hundred years before a Spanish sailor drifted ashore from a shipwreck and gave them their first knowledge of Christianity, the natives had discovered the statue. It was found in a cave by two shepherds, who had taken refuge there in a storm with their sheep. The men had never seen a statue before, and thought that it was alive. They made motions for it to go away, so they could bring their sheep into the cave, for the animals held back and would not go further. When the stranger did not move, one of the shepherds took up a rock and threw it. Instantly, his arm stiffened and began to pain. The other shepherd, being braver, went close to the statue. It did not move or speak, and he, completely puzzled, took out his knife and tried to cut its finger. Instead, his own began to bleed. Terrified, the shepherds fled, leaving their sheep.



They reported to the chief that there was a great god in a cave. The chief told them they had probably insulted the strange god, and told them to go back and bring it to him. As soon as they touched it, both were healed of their wounds. They carried the statue to a house of the village, and tried to honor it as best they could. A few nights later, they were surprised to hear beautiful music, and to see strange beings, all alike, setting candles around the strange "god" and lighting them. The natives had never seen candles, as there were no bees on the islands and no way to make wax.

Eventually the natives built a special house for the

stranger, and for nearly half a century there were lights, music, and lovely fragrances surrounding it. These no one could explain. The people made offerings of fruit and flowers, and noted that the light-beings—whatever they were—kept the candles lighted around their crude little altar. The Spanish sailor who drifted in evidently knew who she was, but could not tell them as he did not know their language. Finally, in 1520, a native boy who was out fishing was captured by a passing ship and taken to Spain. After a few years he was returned to his home, and knowing that he had seen the outside world, the natives asked him about the statue. He knelt and made the Sign of the Cross, and told them what he could about Christianity. When missionaries came, the people were prepared to receive them.

Some time before their conversion to Christianity, a curious thing occurred. There were Christians on one of the nearby islands who recognized who the statue must represent. They begged of the people of Tenerife to let them have the statue. The pagan natives refused because, they claimed, she brought them good fortune. So the Christians decided to steal the statue, which they felt should be in Christian hands. They succeeded in their plan, brought the statue to their own island, and set it up on the high altar of the church with candles burning around it. In the morning, they found that the statue had turned her back on the congregation, and no amount of pulling would get it back again. Rapidly there followed a serious sickness on the island. Frightened and sorry, the Christians took the statue back. They were amazed

to find that the pagans had not even missed it, since another statue had stood in its place all the time the original one was gone.

Devotion to Our Lady of the Candlemass (Candelaria) spread rapidly through the Spanish countries and, through their explorers, to South America and the Philippines. Large and ornate shrines to Our Lady under this title grew up in all the Spanish colonies. Several of these continued the reputation for healing miracles held by the original.

There are several mysteries about Our Lady of the Candlemass; one is the question of how the statue got there in the first place. Being of very heavy wood, it might have floated in from shipwreck—except that, in 1400, there were few ships in that part of the Atlantic from which it might have floated. Secondly, it was found standing, on a flat rock just inside a cave at some distance from the high tide mark. There were no scars on the statue to indicate that it had come in by the rockstrewn coast, battered by waves. The type of material, a heavy reddish wood, has never been identified. The color—natural in the cheeks, the rest brown—does not give the appearance of being exposed to salt water and damp air. The statue is three and one-half feet high. The eyes have the appearance of following the beholder, and the color of the cheeks sometimes changes. The hair is uncovered, golden, and worn in plaits. The Babe is unclothed, and holds a golden bird in both hands. Our Lady holds a candle in her left hand.

The second mystery concerns the wax. There are no

bees on the islands, hence wax is never gathered. A few days before the Feast of Candlemass in 1497, great quantities of a particularly pure wax were found at various places on the island. Several times since, the same thing has occurred. People gather the wax and save it for pious souvenirs. It is sometimes found in loaves weighing ten or twelve pounds.

The third mystery concerns the candles. Even today, it is said, one finds candle-ends with the wax burned very low, near the cave of Saint Blaise where the statue was found. Some of the candle-ends are set up on the rocks of the beach. People insist that the angels come in from the sea to celebrate the feast of the Assumption and sing for Our Lady of Candelaria. Wax and wicks are of strange materials which, the good people of the neighborhood insist, could only come from heaven.

# *Algeria*

## OUR LADY OF AFRICA, ALGIERS

THE FIRST shrine of Our Lady of Africa was a little statue set in a frame of shells at a spot where robbers were accustomed to hide out. Gradually, it became a place of prayer and peace, and the robbers went elsewhere. Families of fishermen out at sea used to pray there, and sailors went to make their thanksgiving after a dangerous voyage. Since it was first associated with sailors, the shrine was first known as Our Lady Star of the Sea.

The first little grotto of rocks and shells became too small and was replaced first by a small chapel, then by a large church. A little while after the building of the new church, a miracle made it even better known. Archbishop Lavigerie, of Algiers, was returning to his See from Rome on a ship carrying 700 soldiers. With the Archbishop was a large party of priests for the African missions, including a Trappist Abbot. A few miles from the shores of Africa the ship, caught in a terrible storm, began to sink. The holy Archbishop called on all to make an Act of Contrition and gave them absolution, and enjoined upon them a pilgrimage to the new shrine of Our Lady of Africa if they should be saved. To the great surprise of everyone, the ship was saved—through no effort of the officers, who had despaired. On reaching land safely, the promised pilgrimage was made. The story was

carried by ship to every Mediterranean port and the shrine was soon a haven for sailors from many nations.

Since this time a custom has grown up at the shrine of Our Lady of Africa which is probably unique in the world. On each Sunday afternoon a service is held here for those who have died at sea with no chance of Christian burial. A priest, in black vestments as for the absolution at a Mass for the Dead, goes to the cliff top overlooking the Sea and recites the Libera, the De Profundis and other prayers for those who lie beneath the waters of every Sea, and sprinkles the waves below with holy water.

The present statue of Our Lady of Africa is quite a large figure of dark bronze which was sent to the Mission by the Religious of the Sacred Heart in France. Moslem and Christian alike honor her.



# *Canada*

## **OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY, CAP DE LA MADELEINE**

AMERICA's shrine of the Rosary is in French Canada, at the place of the Three Rivers.

The banks of the St. Lawrence were settled by pious Frenchmen, lay and religious, who wished to build a Christian community in the wilderness, among the fiercest Indians of the North American continent. Most of the early priests were martyred. But they did sow this region with Christian settlements which gradually bore fruit and subdued the Indians where arms did not.

Three Rivers was the site of a shelter for Christian Indians who found it a hardship to remain with their tribes. One of the people who lived there for a time was the mother of Kateri Tekakwitha, the Indian girl who may one day be canonized. Most of the missionaries of this part of the world came through there and Saint Isaac Jogues said Mass in the first little log cabin church just before he was captured and tortured by the Indians.

However, even after this good beginning, there were sad days for the church at Cap de la Madeleine. Canada was so large, so many of the early missionaries were killed, life was so hard in the wilderness that gradually the mission center was abandoned. For more than a hundred years no priest was at hand to help the people of the region, and without a priest, the Faith of the people

suffered. After this long period of trouble, a new priest was assigned to the church at Cap de la Madeleine. What Father Desilets found was enough to discourage anyone. No one came to Mass any more; the church was all but



in ruins. As he knelt praying alone in the church, he saw a strange and terrible sight: a hog had wandered into the broken-down church, and was chewing on a rosary he had picked up. Father Desilets took the rosary and drove the hog away, and begged Our Lady in prayer to help him to

build up the church there, and to do reparation for the neglect of religion.

The good priest determined to use the Rosary as the means of bringing back his scattered flock. His plan succeeded so well that it was not long before his little church was overcrowded. When it was decided to build a new church, the parish found itself up against a problem.

There was no stone on the side of the river where the church stood. There was plenty of it on the other side, but the river was deep and swift, and only in case of a hard freeze would the ice be strong enough to serve as a bridge for the stone wagons to come and go. It appeared to Father Desilets that the only thing to do was to pray to Our Lady to build them a bridge of ice for his purpose. It was most unlikely that such a thing would happen naturally, as the river was nearly two miles wide and ice rarely covered it completely. However, they set about praying.

As the winter wore on, the parishioners became discouraged. The winter was mild for Canada, and as the middle of March approached, it seemed impossible that there would be a hard freeze. The first signs of Spring had already appeared when, suddenly, a cold wind came up, and huge blocks of ice began breaking away from the river upstream and lodging firmly in the river at Cap de la Madeleine. On St. Joseph's Day, as if Our Lady wished to point out to them that St. Joseph was more of a carpenter than she was, the bridge of ice was firm, and it reached from bank to bank. Rejoicing, the people hauled the stones across the "rosary bridge," and just as the last

load reached the bank safely, there was a tremendous crash and the ice began whirling away downstream.

When the new church was built, there was a discussion as to whether Our Lady would want it dedicated to her under the title of Queen of the Most Holy Rosary. The old statue, which had been there long before the new church was built, was placed over the main altar. Two priests and a crippled man of the parish prayed that Our Lady would give them a sign if she wished the new name for her church. They prayed for the cure of the cripple. But as the three stood before the statue, looking earnestly at her face, they received another sign. The face of the statue came alive; the eyes moved, her face was alight with the life and love. They felt they had indeed received their sign, so the church was dedicated to the Queen of the Rosary.

In 1904 the statue was honored by Papal coronation, and the church was made an official pilgrimage place. During the past few years, especially during the Marian year, the shrine of Our Lady of the Cape has been the center of Marian devotion in Canada, and a magnet which attracts people from all over the North American Continent.

# *United States of America*

## **OUR LADY OF THE CONQUEST, SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO**

THE LITTLE statue of Our Lady called “La Conquistadora” by the Spaniards and “Our Lady of the Conquest” in English, is one of the oldest statues in America and merits all our interest. She was brought to Santa Fe in the present State of New Mexico in 1625. Because she was associated with the Spanish conquest of the Southwest she received her present title, though she was originally carved as Our Lady of the Assumption.

This little statue has suffered a great deal at the hands of pious people who felt they were honoring her by changing her appearance. Originally carved from wood and overlaid with gold and colored designs, she was carved up and the arms released so that she could be dressed in the fashion then in vogue in Spain. At one time a Babe was carved to fit in her arms. The pedestal was cut off so that she would fit into a niche. Her head was cut away to accommodate a wig of real hair. Even her title was changed so often that it is difficult to keep track of her; first she was Our Lady of the Assumption; then, when the name of the church was changed, Our Lady of the Immacu-

late Conception; later still, in honor of the Rosary, Queen of the Rosary.

The little statue was set up in the new city of Santa Fe and there was honored both by the Spaniards and the Indians. In 1680, the Indians rose against the Spaniards and in a few dreadful days of slaughter killed twenty-one Franciscans and a number of other Spaniards. The city of Santa Fe fell to the Indians and the white people left hastily and in great terror. A woman by the name of Josefa Sambrane carried the statue in her arms as they fled from the Indians. In their temporary camp, the little Lady was set up again and all implored her protection. The exile from Santa Fe lasted thirteen years.

Eventually Spanish troops were sent to reconquer Santa Fe, and their leader, Don Diego de Vargas, promised Our Lady that if the city were retaken without bloodshed he would personally place her on her old throne at Santa Fe. Proceeding among the various Indian tribes with Our Lady's banner, he persuaded the Indians to settle the dispute peacefully. As they came to Santa Fe, however, the natives who held the city decided to starve them out, and taunted them from their comfortable place behind the walls. The homeless Spaniards knelt around the statue of La Conquistadora and begged her help. The Indians gave in without a fight, and De Vargas took the city without bloodshed.

The parish church was rebuilt for the little Lady of the Conquest, and new honors were showered upon her. In the years since then, an annual procession has been held to commemorate the great event. The statue is car-

ried in procession to a chapel at some distance (originally a temporary chapel made of fresh boughs) where a novena of Masses is sung. Then she is carried back processionally.

During the Marian year, La Conquistadora went on pilgrimage to all the parishes in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe. At the end of the pilgrimage there was a fiesta, with Mary crowned Queen of the Festival, a unique honor for a truly unique statue.

#### OUR LADY OF READY HELP, NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

THIS TITLE of Our Lady does not translate readily into English; its meaning is quite clear in French, that Our Lady is always quick to help those who call upon her. There is more to it than the title *Good Help*; it means help *in a hurry*, which ought to appeal to Americans. Our Lady of Ready Help is connected, in a special way, with Americans who needed help—in a hurry—at a time when the young country might easily have been conquered again by England, in the War of 1812.

The convent of the Ursuline Sisters, with which this miraculous statue is connected, was founded in New Orleans by the French in 1727. When New Orleans became a Spanish possession, many Spanish girls entered the convent. Later, New Orleans once more changed hands and became French again. Terrified that they would suffer the results of the French Revolution, the Spanish nuns

withdrew to Spanish territory, and left the convent with so few sisters that they could hardly do their work.

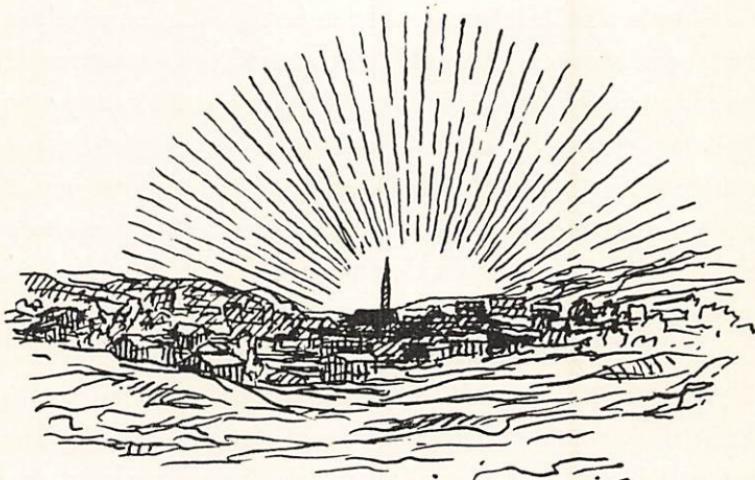
The sisters appealed to France for helpers. Many of their sisters there had been in hiding since the Revolution, and one of these, Mother St. Michael, determined to come to New Orleans in answer to the request for sisters. There were at least a dozen good reasons why this was not advisable; no one would give her permission to make the trip, and there were other difficulties as well. In her trouble she prayed to Our Lady under the title of Ready Help, and promised that if she arrived safely in New Orleans she would promote the devotion there. In spite of all the obstacles, her way was cleared, and she arrived safe and sound. Her little statue was set up in the convent of New Orleans and became a favorite of all.

Mother St. Michael had been in New Orleans only a few years when more trouble threatened the hard-pressed community. In 1815, the United States—still a tiny rim of states along the Atlantic seaboard—was again having trouble with England. The English navy had become a real threat to American survival, and the affair came to a crisis in the battle of Chalmette outside the city of New Orleans on January 7th of that year. The American troops, commanded by General Jackson, counted only 6000 men. The English numbered 15,000, and there seemed not a doubt that they would win the great city of New Orleans and subject it to plunder. General Jackson's reply to this threat was that if they took the city, they would find it a heap of ruins. While the American troops drew up for

battle, forces of another kind were gathering in the Ursuline chapel; women and children of all Faiths knelt and prayed for God's help. On the morning of the battle a Solemn Mass was sung in the chapel of Our Lady of Ready Help, and a vow made to have an anniversary Mass said each year if the city were saved.

Historians have never quite accounted for the fact that the British, in this uneven battle, lost 3000 men, while the Americans counted six killed and seven wounded—and the city saved. The women in the chapel knew who had gained the victory. General Jackson himself paid a visit to the convent to thank the sisters and the women for their prayers; he could not explain the victory either.

It would be a fine thing if American Catholics would remember, on every January 8, the Victory of Our Lady of New Orleans.



# *Mexico*

## **OUR LADY OF ST. JOHN OF THE LAKES**

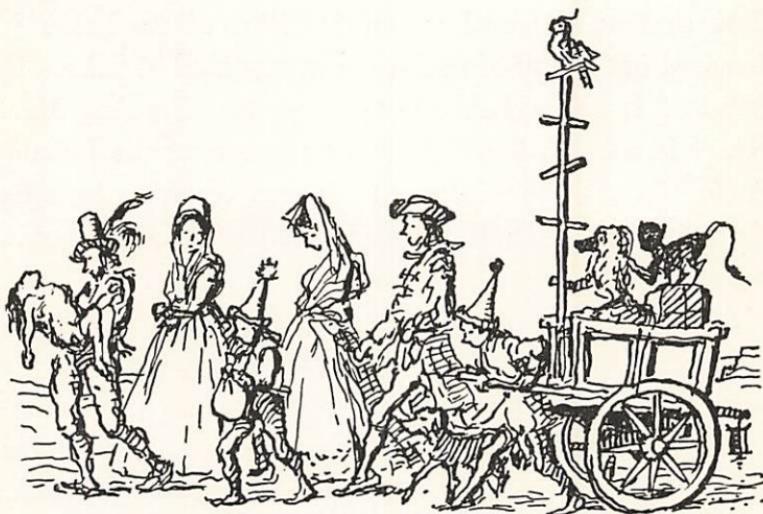
THE STATUE of Our Lady of St. John of the Lakes is honored in the city of that name in the State of Jalisco in Mexico. It was probably first brought there by Fray Martin of Jesus, who founded these towns among the Indians in the days of the Conquest. It was certainly brought there by some of the Franciscans and is still in Franciscan care.

The statue is about eighteen inches high and represents Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception. Like a number of other Indian statues, it is made from cornstalks and orchid glue. It is now dressed, in gold for feastdays; most probably it was not dressed to begin with.

Like many of the statues which are peculiarly Indian, the little lady of St. John of the Lakes is surrounded by a mist of legends. The most commonly accepted one is that of the miracle which brought her out of the dark sacristy where she had been banished for many years, and caused the renewal of popular fervor which without any doubt took place early in the seventeenth century.

According to this legend, a poor family of tumblers were practicing for a performance in one of the villages of Guadalajara. Their principal act consisted in a dance on the open edges of daggers which were planted in the ground. During the practice the littlest girl in the family

made a false turn and fell on the daggers. She was so badly hurt that it was soon seen that she would die. They started to carry her into the hospital but she did not live to get there. The family of tumblers came into town wailing their grief, the father carrying the dead child in his arms.



The wife of the sacristan who had care of the chapel of Our Lady had great devotion to the Little Statue which for many years now had rested in the sacristy forgotten by everyone. Touched by the mother's grief, she begged the tumblers to come in and present themselves to Our Lady, asking her help in their terrible grief. This they did and before the astonished eyes of the crowd the little girl came back to life.

The tumblers were poor people but they wanted to do something for Our Lady in return for this great favor. The statue was badly in need of refinishing since the paint

had faded and no one had ever bothered to repaint it. The tumblers took the statue and set out to find someone who was capable of doing the repainting. The first night they stayed at an inn. A young man who was also staying at the inn came to them and told them that he was a painter especially skilled in painting statues. They gave him the statue that night. The following morning, wishing to make final arrangements about the payment, they went to his room. The statue was there, beautifully refinished, but the young man was gone. They inquired from the inn-keeper where they could find the young man to repay him. He told them no young man had stayed there the night before. They returned the statue and as they came into the town most of the people came out to escort them to the chapel. Here the Little Madonna was placed on the high altar where it remained.

There have been three churches built at St. John of the Lakes since the miracle of the Tumblers. In the year 1732 there were ten thousand pilgrims to the shrine. Even today there are thousands in pilgrimage every year for the two principal feasts, February 2nd and December 8th.

Our Lady of St. John of the Lakes and Our Lady of Zapopan are the most popular Madonnas in the State of Jalisco.

The statue was solemnly crowned August 15, 1904.

#### **OUR LADY OF REMEDIES, MEXICO CITY**

THIS FAMOUS little statue came with Cortez in 1519 to participate in the conquest of Mexico. It was first set up

in a temporary chapel in one of the rooms of Montezuma's palace, where the Spanish officers made their devotions. On the terrible night of July 10, 1520, when the Indians rose against the Spanish invaders, one of the officers rescued the statue before fighting his way out of the palace. He did not get far when he was cut down by Aztec arrows and died at the foot of a maguey tree. The tiny statue either fell, or was pushed, into the roots of the tree where it was overlooked by the Indians.

Some twenty years later an Aztec prince called "John of the Eagle," a recent convert to Christianity, was walking near the maguey tree when he heard a sweet voice calling him. Puzzled, he went to the Franciscan Fathers at the nearby mission and told them about it. They convinced him that it was just his imagination and not to worry about it.

Some days after this, John was at work on a new church at Tacuba when there was an accident and a large pillar fell on him. He was badly crushed, and was immediately given the Last Sacraments. During the night, while he was thought to be dying, his thoughts kept returning to the sweet voice he had heard calling his name. Perhaps if he had answered that voice, he would not have been hurt, he told himself. He prayed to Our Lady to help him. Very early in the morning she appeared to him, gave him a sash which she told him to wear always, and cured him.

A few days later he passed the tree again, and once more heard the voice. This time his curiosity got the better of him, and he looked carefully around the roots of the tree. Half buried in the sand he found a tiny statue

which he recognized as being of Our Lady. John of the Eagle was in a dilemma. The Franciscan Fathers, to whom he had related the story of the sweet voice that called him from the maguey tree, had given him no encouragement. The excitement over the picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe had not yet died down. The good priests may have felt there had been enough of the supernatural for the time being. Still, the Aztec convert felt that he should do something about it; one should not leave a lovely lady alone and unguarded. "Come home with me, gracious lady," he said. "I will see that you have a good home and are cared for." He brought the little statue home wrapped in his cape, and set her up on a rude altar.

Here she reigned as Queen of his humble home for ten or twelve years. John kept his little shrine supplied with flowers and, occasionally, fruit and pretty stones. Gradually through the years, people started coming to pray at this humble shrine, and their number had increased to the point where they were under foot all day and part of the night. When the local schoolmaster suggested that John should build a little chapel for the statue he eagerly took up the suggestion. He set about building a shrine and finally enthroned her there. The next day, to his horror, she was gone. Lonely and sorrowful, he went back to the maguey tree where he had first found her—and there she was! He returned the statue to the new chapel and decorated the shrine carefully. She disappeared again. And, just at this point, John became seriously sick with a fever.

Fever is often fatal in this land, and John's relatives

hurried to carry him to Our Lady's feet. Whether it was their idea or his to go to the shrine at Guadalupe is not clear, but that is where they took him. And as he lay gasping before the shrine, he heard the same voice that had called him from the maguey tree say to him, "Why do you come to my house when you put me out of yours?" John mumbled an apology, and she continued, "If you did not want me in your house, why not take me back to the maguey tree where you first found me, and build a chapel there?"

"If you cure me, Lady, I most certainly will," promised the sick man. He was as good as his word. He started building the chapel as soon as he had recovered. It was made into a little hermitage and he stayed there for the rest of his life, tending the shrine and praying to Our Lady.

After the death of John, the hermitage fell into ruins. There was still much political disturbance in Mexico, and the little statue from Spain was not as popular with the Indians as the picture of Guadalupe which was so markedly Indian. In 1574, the Spanish governor happened to see the ruined hermitage and heard the story. He ordered the building of a beautiful church to house the statue, and this in time became the church of the aristocrats because of the statue's ties with Spain.

At one time, during an uprising of the Indians, a death list was prepared by them of the persons to be killed or exiled from Aztec lands. At the head of the list was the name of the little Lady of Los Remidos, who was described as "a seditious person and one inciting to crimes

against the laws of the chiefs.” After the trouble had died down and Our Lady was no longer a political refugee, she was reinstated in the Spanish church.



Our Lady of the Remedies is sometimes called “The Little Lady Who Brings the Rain,” because on several occasions when the region was suffering from drought, she has brought rain in answer to the prayer of the people. So famous is she for this that other cities sometimes borrow her for a procession around their parched fields, begging her to help them—which, they say, she always does.

#### OUR LADY OF ZAPOPAN

OUR LADY OF ZAPOPAN has several titles; she is variously called “The Queen of Jalisco” or “The General of the Armies.” To most of her people she is “La Chapparrita,” the pretty little girl.

This is rather a small statue, around a foot high.

She appeared first in Mexico in the company of Father Anthony of Segovia, a Franciscan, in 1530. He had spent a long and apparently fruitless effort trying to convert the people of Jalisco. When he begged for Our Lady's help, she gave it. Rays of light shone from the statue and the miracle impressed the Indians so that they came for instructions. 6000 were baptized in one day.

Naturally, the statue that had played such a part in their conversion became their favorite. She was their wonder-worker, who healed their sick and even raised their dead on occasion. She was so much a part of the lives of her scattered people that they would not allow her to live in any one place; she must, perforce, become a pilgrim, and go around visiting first one small village and then another. Each year, up to the present time, she travels in this way.

Her travels begin yearly on the Feast of Saint Anthony, and she comes back to her own shrine church on October 5th. In the early years of her pilgrimage she traveled in a special white coach lined with satin, which was pulled by gentlemen who ranked as knights of Our Lady of Zapopan. She now rides in a blue Cadillac which is used for her alone.

Like any other Lady who travels a lot, La Chapparita has an extensive wardrobe. This includes not only lovely silks and jewels, but a warm traveling cloak and a large hat. She even carries a small purse and a beauty kit which includes, among other things, a little comb and brush to keep her long hair tidy. The statue was crowned in 1920.

All along her path, those who are proud to call her their Queen prepare pageants and decorations that they think she will enjoy. Little children act out scenes from the life of Our Lady. Indians do native dances. Bands play and choirs try to outsing one another. Her Mass is sung in blue vestments, and attendants dressed in her colors accompany her wherever she goes. Native jugglers perform for her and even the factory whistles are blown in her honor.

# *Costa Rica*

## **OUR LADY OF ANGELS**

THE LITTLE statue of Our Lady of Angels, "La Negrita," was found in the woods of Cartago outside the city of San Jose in 1635.

Its discoverer was a little Negro girl by the name of Juanita. She was gathering firewood, and she had laid her large bundle down to tie it when she happened to look on a rock nearby and saw there a statue of the Madonna. It was black stone, very tiny, and pictured Our Lady with the Holy Infant. Juanita was charmed with the thought that the Lady was black; she took the statue home with her and set it up in her own room.

The next morning the statue was gone. Search as she would, Juanita could not find it. Sorrowful, she set out for the woods and there, to her great surprise, was another statue on the same rock! This one she took home and hid in a chest, under some household linens, as she thought someone was playing tricks on her. When, the next morning, she discovered this was gone too, she departed in tears for the woods, convinced that she was such a naughty girl that the Virgin wouldn't stay with her.

When Juanita reached the rock, she found the statue as before. Thoroughly frightened, she left her firewood and ran into town to the priest with the little Madonna. She gave it to him and asked him to guard it because it

“kept going away.” The priest laughed and placed it on a shelf. The next morning, when Juanita arrived to see it, there was no statue.

Juanita brought the little statue back again from the woods and gave it to the priest. He, by now, was quite annoyed, as he felt that someone had been stealing it. Therefore he locked it up in a safe and assured Juanita that no one could possibly get it out of there. This made it all the more embarrassing when he discovered later that the statue was no longer there.

This time, he went to the woods himself, and saw the statue on top of the rock. He thought that probably Our Lady had chosen that place for a shrine, so here he set about building one. The people of his parish were happy to cooperate; most of them, like Juanita, were Negroes, and it seemed wonderful to them that a little black Madonna should come to live among them.

The shrine at Cartago is a famous place of pilgrimage today; there are several feasts celebrated there with great pomp, to which most of the people of Costa Rica come, gaily dressed and in holiday mood. The little black statue is still there, enshrined now on a beautiful throne. Some call her Our Lady of Angels because they think that the angels brought her to Cartago. But by most of her people she is called La Negrita, the Little Black Madonna, who belongs to her people.

The statue was solemnly crowned in 1927.

# *Cuba*

## OUR LADY OF CHARITY, COBRE

THE ORIGIN of the statue now venerated at Cobre in Cuba is lost amid legends and confusion. What most probably is the history of the statue is this. A young officer, Alfonse Ojeda, who accompanied Columbus on his second voyage to America, was in command of a group of Spaniards sent to explore the coast of Central America. Ill with fever, he and his companions were captured by the pirate Talavera. They were finally released in a tempest off Cuba, and drifted in half-dead to find that the natives would not help them at all. Many of the men died. Finally a Christian chief came upon them and gave them the help they needed. In gratitude for his kindness, Ojeda gave him his most treasured possession, a statue of Our Lady which he had brought with him from Spain.

The chief was very pleased with the little Madonna, and helped to build a small chapel for it. He and his people decorated the shrine, and danced and sang for the entertainment of the little Queen. But soon after Ojeda's departure, other chiefs, who were pagan, challenged him to prove the power of his God against theirs. There are various conflicting accounts of the contest, but in any case, the Christians won it.

Probably because of rumors about the contest between the chiefs, the next group of Spaniards to arrive

told the chief they were going to remove the statue to one of the Spanish settlements. The following morning, chief and statue had disappeared into the swamp. They stayed there until every Spaniard was safely gone. Even the famous Father Las Casas, whom the Indians loved and trusted, had no more success when he asked the chief to trade statues with him; once more the little Lady was taken into the swamp to hide.

It is thought that the chief was drowned during a flood when he had hidden in the swamp with his beloved statue and that the statue was washed out in a flood sometime later. That is one theory advanced for the presence of the statue floating in the Bay of Nipa in the part of the story that is best known. But no one knows for sure.

What is known is that in the early seventeenth century there was a shortage of salt in the Spanish dominions, and a royal order went out that several shiploads should be obtained from the salt beds of Nipa Bay. Among those sent out to help raise the quota were three men in a small boat; two Indian boys and a younger Negro boy, all three of whom were named Juan. They had stocked their boat with three days' provisions and were well out of reach of land when a hurricane struck them. Terrified, they prayed to Our Lady to help them, and were amazed and delighted when the hurricane abated and they were left to go on their way. After the darkness of the storm had passed, the little Negro boy caught sight of a white object floating in the distance. They watched it for awhile and then decided that it must be a pelican, washed out to sea by the storm. However, it followed them until finally they abandoned

their course and rowed over to see what it was. As they drew nearer they could see that it was a small and very lovely statue of Our Lady, standing upright on a plank which floated easily on the water.



They pulled the plank in and removed the statue into the boat. On the plank was carved a legend; "I am the Virgin of Charity." They decided among themselves that they had best put in at the nearest port and leave the statue in safe keeping while they went on their errand, so they did this. They delivered her into the keeping of the Spanish officer there, and explained to him that she was a Lady of Miracles, because she had ridden out the storm without even one drop of water dampening her white silk dress.

The officer was impressed with the story, and set up the little statue in a temporary chapel. At some time after this, when the excitement had died down somewhat, some-

one discovered that the statue was gone. It was known that the little Negro boy felt a special ownership for the statue because he had been the first to see it; he was accused of stealing it. In spite of his protests he was tied to a post to be whipped, but as the first blow was struck someone came running to say that the statue was back in its place.

There was some dispute over where the statue would finally be placed. Some time after the episode of the disappearance, a child by the name of Appolonia saw a vision of Our Lady on top of a rock at Cobre. The statue, which was destined for Santiago de Cuba, was being carried there when by some mistake the bearers took the wrong way and arrived at Cobre. Several other signs indicated that this was the place of Our Lady's choice, so it was here that the church was built.

The Church of Our Lady of Charity is today a place of pilgrimage. The little statue, about sixteen inches high, has a copper-colored face which pleases her Indian friends of Cuba. Her face is very beautiful, her expression kindly, and her Baby winsome. The main feast of the shrine is kept on December 8th, and Our Lady under this title is patroness of Cuba and the Antilles.

# *Argentina*

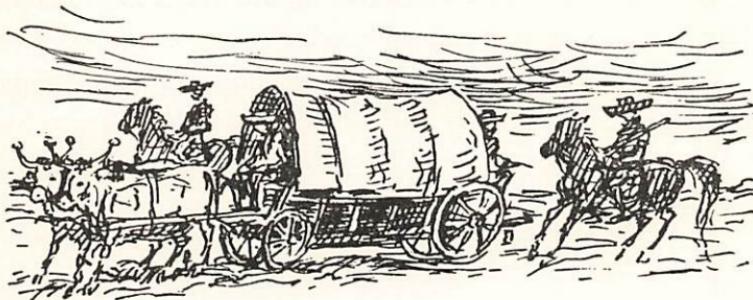
## **OUR LADY OF LUJAN**

OUR LADY OF LUJAN has long been the reigning Queen of Argentina, whom passing tyrants cannot long dethrone. The Argentine flag is in her colors of blue and white, and she is dearly loved by the simple people.

In 1639 a devout Portuguese farmer near Sumampa in Tucuman wished to build a Lady shrine which would bring solace to his people in this wilderness. He sent to a friend in Brazil to get him a statue. The friend sent two, so that there would be a choice: a Purisima (the Holy Virgin by herself) and a larger Madre De Dios, a Mother and Child.

The statues were crated carefully in separate boxes and packed on a wagon train bound for the interior. Fearful of hostile Indians, the freight wagon was in a caravan, heavily armed. The slow-moving bullock carts finally reached the banks of the Lujan river and camped for the night. In the morning, the cart containing the statues could not be moved, even though six yoke of oxen were finally harnessed to it. The puzzled men decided to remove some of the freight. They took off the large box containing the bigger statue. The wagon still would not move, so they took off the small box containing the small statue. Immediately the wagon moved on, very easily. They put the little box back; the wagon stood still. They removed it, and it moved

again. Completely bewildered, they opened the box and discussed the situation. They decided to leave the statue behind, and put it in the care of the only land-holder who lived in this wilderness, a man who had a vast farm nearby. A little Negro boy who was with the caravan begged to be allowed to stay and look after the statue; he was afraid the wild Indians would hurt it! He remained, and finally the wagon train went on, bearing away the larger statue and leaving the small one with the farmer at Lujan.



Soon a pious lady who lived some miles away heard of the statue and decided it would be better off in her care, so she took it home. It returned by itself to the river bank. In 1677 she erected a chapel there, where the statue seemed to wish to stay. The little Negro boy remained faithfully at this dangerous place, tending the shrine and the statue until he died in extreme old age. The wild Indians never bothered the statue, but throngs of people, Indian and Portuguese, came to the shrine to pray. Many miracles were credited to the intercession of Our Lady of Lujan.

Even today, Our Lady of Lujan works miracles.

Those who love her say that sometimes, when one goes to Mass in the morning, one sees that the skirts of her bell-shaped robes are wet with dew, and that there are bits of thistle-down and plant burrs clinging to the fabric. She does not, of course, tell anyone where she has been, but some time later, one hears that she has worked a miracle for someone far away, out in the country where there are weed-burrs and thistle-down.

The statue of Our Lady of Lujan is fourteen inches high, and looks much like a doll. She wears very richly decorated garments, a dress like an alb and a blue mantle like a cope, heavily embroidered.

On May 8, 1886, the statue was honored with Papal coronation.

# *Bolivia*

## OUR LADY OF COPACABANA

THE SHRINE of Our Lady of Copacabana dates from 1582, the time of the Spanish conquest. It is located in the high mountains near Lake Titicaca where in pre-Christian days there was a shrine to the sun god.

The statue venerated in this singular shrine was carved by an Indian by the name of Tuto-Yupanki. He came of a tribe that had not long been Christian, and who had a sinister history of idolatry and human sacrifice. At the time of the conversion of these Indians, the Friars discovered that they did fine work in metals, especially gold. However, they had never seen a statue, except the terribly ugly ones of their gods. The Friars charged with this particular mission field had neither statues nor artists to make them. When a plague struck in 1582, they particularly regretted having no madonna. The Indian boy, Tuto-Yupanki, offered to try his hand at making one. His good will was great, but the statue was very ugly. Not wishing to hurt his feelings, the Fathers said they would put it up in their own house.

The Indian boy, to whom the statue seemed quite beautiful, was very disappointed. The Madonna was placed in the Friars' house, and Tuto-Yupanki used to go there often to pray. One time he ran to the Friars to ask them what kind of lights they had used around the statue,

because it was lighted up so brightly. The Friars came to look, and saw that there were, indeed, bright rays of light around the statue, but no human hand had placed them there. The whole statue glowed, and the face, by a mysterious transformation, was no longer ugly. They placed the statue in the church, and its maker was overjoyed.

Our Lady helped her Indian children in their business deals, healed their sick, and in a thousand ways proved herself a Mother. Once she cured a lame man and gave him a job to do. She told him that the Indians, like so many other of her children, were too quick to forget the Passion and Death of her Son. She taught him a song with several verses recounting the facts of the Passion, and told him to sing it at fiestas and to teach other people to sing it.

The original statue is never removed from the church, but there are several duplicates which are on occasion carried along the shores of the lake in procession, to stop a bad storm or to get a little boat safely home. The song about the Passion which Our Lady is supposed to have taught to the lame man is still sung as a part of the Feast-day celebration. Our Lady reigns now from a beautiful church, and she wears silk and jewels. But it is still definitely an Indian shrine, which is very much of the people and dearly loved. A double stairway leads up to where she is enthroned among the glittering jewels. The stairway is worn down by the feet of humble people who find her their dearest Mother.

The statue was solemnly crowned in 1920. The two main feasts of the year here are August 6 and February 2.

# *Chile*

## OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY, ANDACOLLO

IN THE fifteenth century a Spanish expedition entered the valley of Aconcagua and discovered the land we now call Chile. They brought with them a statue of Our Lady and set it up in their first city, La Serena. Five years later the Indians revolted against the Spanish rule, destroyed the city and killed most of the inhabitants. The few who survived fled into the mountains, taking the statue with them. Exactly what happened then we do not know, but the Spaniards died and left their treasure alone in the underbrush.

Many years later, after the Spanish had returned and converted the Indians, a young Christian Indian by the name of Collo was cutting tree roots in the mountains when he came across the statue. According to legend, he had struck into the underbrush with his knife when he heard a voice calling his name and saying sadly, "You are hurting me!" He recognized the statue for what it was and took it to the settlement.

Here, through the years, a special devotion has grown up around the statue. This devotion is essentially the same today as it was in the seventeenth century, and it is unique. A ballad was composed, long ago, retelling in many verses the story of Collo's discovery and of his sorrow in damaging the statue. Each year during the festival, which



takes place on the three days of December 24-25-26, a procession is held, and the ballad is sung. A man specially chosen for the occasion makes a formal apology in behalf of Collo. A Rosary confraternity has special place in the procession, and a descriptive dance forms part of the ceremony.

The statue is of cedarwood, a little more than a yard in height. The tunic is painted in rose color, the mantle blue with stars. Our Lady's face is dark in color, and the scar made by Collo's knife still shows on the left eyelid. The Child Jesus on her left arm is blue-eyed. She now wears a robe of white silk and in her right hand she holds a golden scepter. A long Rosary made of solid gold, the gift of the Argentine Republic in 1825, is one of her most valuable treasures.

# *Colombia*

## **OUR LADY OF LAS LAJAS**

IT IS NOT KNOWN who painted this very beautiful picture of Our Lady on a slab of sandstone in a cave high in the Andes. A Dominican, Fray Pedro Bedón, made several others which are similar and he may also have painted this one, although there is no record of his ever being in this part of the country. Luckily, the Indians who kneel at her feet do not worry themselves about who put her there.

Legends surround the story of the discovery of this picture. One day long ago, an Indian woman, Maria Mueses de Quinones, sat down to rest in front of a cave on her way to market. Her little daughter, Rosa, who had been mute from birth, slid down from her mother's back and ran around exploring. What was Maria's surprise to hear the child cry out, "Mamma! Look at the lady with the baby in her arms and the two men beside her!" Maria was almost too frightened to move, as her child had never spoken before, but she went into the cave with her and saw the painting. It was indeed a Lady with a Baby in her arms and the "two men beside her" Maria recognized as St. Dominic and St. Francis.

Maria proceeded on her way to market, and once arrived in the town told the priest, in great excitement, what had happened to her on the mountain. He tried to calm her down and, not succeeding very well, finally told

her to forget the whole thing. Other women at the market laughed at her. All in all, Maria had a bad time of it. She would hardly have believed it herself had she not seen that her child could talk. On her way home she hurried past the cave so that nothing else would happen.

Some days after this, Rosa ran away and climbed the steep path up to the cave. Maria searched for her and



found her there where she suspected she might be. After this Maria and her daughter went very often to the cave. They brought flowers and candles and arranged an altar.

One day Rosa became very sick with a fever. Her condition quickly became grave. Her mother wrapped her warmly and started for the cave, sure that the lovely Lady would save her child. It was a long walk and Rosa was dead when the mother arrived. She laid the little body

in front of the simple altar, and reminded the Lady how often Rosa had knelt there with her. She was not surprised when the child returned to life, but the neighbors, who had followed along for the excitement, set up a clamor. They went in a body to see the priest, who finally decided to investigate. This was only the first of many miracles worked by the flagstone Virgin, most of which were for her Indian children.

The church itself, which grew up naturally from the pilgrimages, is something of a miracle. The present one dates from 1916. It is perched like an eagle's nest at a particularly impossible spot on a high mountain. More than 160,000 pilgrims from all the surrounding countries and some from foreign countries annually climb to this almost inaccessible point. The Shrine is now in charge of the Dominican Fathers.

The picture itself is quite large. It is painted on the solid flagstone and was done by a devout and gifted hand. Our Lady has long black hair. She wears a long scarlet tunic decorated with gold leaves and flowers, and a blue mantle with white stars. She holds the Babe on her left arm. He has blond hair and blue eyes. Our Lady holds a rosary in her right hand. They have both been crowned.

One of the most famous miracles of Las Lajas is that of the man who came to commit suicide by jumping off the nearby cliff. His wife happened to be praying at the shrine, and knew nothing of his intentions, though she was praying for his reformation of character. As he jumped he felt himself pushed backward. Not only was his life saved but he was completely reformed. This and more than forty other miracles have been authenticated.

# *Ecuador*

## **OUR LADY OF THE ERASER**

THE Shrine of Our Lady of the Eraser, "La Borradora," is situated in an old building behind the presidential palace which at one time served as the jail. The legend dates from colonial days and concerns the story of a man who was unjustly convicted of murder. He was confined in the jail awaiting execution and being a very devout man, he recommended himself to Our Lady and begged her to save his life.

When the day came for the sentence to be carried out, the notary came to read the sentence and discovered that by some oversight the name of the criminal had not been filled in. Also, there was no mention of the judges who had condemned him. Since these facts were necessary for a legal document, he hunted up the judges, who called a special meeting to pronounce once more on the man's guilt. They all solemnly signed their names and when the notary once more entered the prisoner's cell the same thing happened over again; there was a blank where the name should be. Taking this as a sign that something was wrong with the decision, the judge ordered that the case be reopened, and it was shortly proved that the man was innocent.

Because of this miracle this cell of the jail was enlarged into a devotional chapel and finally the jail was



removed entirely. A pious lady built and beautified the chapel and for many years it was the refuge of those who sought Our Lady's help. Over the door was a large painting of Our Lady of the Rosary with Saints Dominic and Francis and the inscription "Refuge of Sinners, Pray for us."

In 1895 the statue, which had been placed there at some time since the miracle, was removed to the parish church, then later to the Monastery of St. Clare where it can still be seen.

#### OUR LADY OF QUINCHE

IN 1586 A WOOD-CARVER, Diego de Robles, made a statue of Our Lady, copied from the Spanish image of Guada-

lupe, to be given to the newly-converted Carib Indians. They did not like it, so he made them another, and took the rejected statue with him to Ecuador. Here there were Indians of another tribe who were also new converts, and they had no church nor any sort of image of Our Lady. They traded him some lumber for the little statue, and set it up in a rocky niche near their place of work.



The Indians went about entertaining their new statue as best they could. At the end of the day they would gather at her feet and sing for her, and play melodies on their flutes. They noticed that all day, while they were busy about their work, many lovely little birds fluttered singing about the statue. At night, when they sang for her, there was often a bright light around it. They wove her a tunic of some curious fiber unknown to Europeans, and many cures were later ascribed to this garment.

Word of the wonder-working statue had seeped

through to the neighboring tribes, and many people came to pray before their patroness and remained to live there in the neighborhood. Still not quite willing to trust the Spanish conquerors, the Indians kept quiet about the wonders of their little statue. They wished to build a church for her, but had no knowledge of architecture. After a great deal of effort and many mistakes, they managed to build a small chapel.

When the time came to place the statue in the new chapel, the Indians realized that they had no suitable throne for it. At this point the wood-carver, Robles, arrived, and they begged him to make the throne they wanted so badly. The wood-carver made excuses, and finally set out on horseback for Quito without completing the job. Going across a jungle bridge over a mountain torrent, his horse stumbled and threw him. His spur caught in a rope of the bridge and he was left hanging head-down for some little time before he was rescued. By this time he had repented of his lack of charity to the Indians, and gladly returned to finish the throne for the statue.

An Indian who was cutting lumber for the church had the misfortune to cut himself badly with an axe. On praying to the Virgin of the Rocks, he was instantly healed. A poor woman made the offer to cook for the workmen who were rushing to get the church finished before the rainy season. But, she said, she had a field of grain to be harvested. She told Our Lady that she would see to the cooking, and that she hoped Our Lady would see to the grain. Our Lady did; it was nicely stacked when the woman returned from her errand of charity. An even

more striking miracle occurred when a young couple, who had left their baby sleeping in the shade while they worked on the church, heard the baby scream and saw that it was being carried off by a large bear. They went in pursuit, praying to Our Lady, and drove off the bear, but found the baby dead and badly mangled. They brought it to the feet of the statue and prayed. Almost instantly, the baby opened its eyes and clutched at the statue and laughed. The fame of this miracle spread to Quito and attracted many pilgrims to the woodland shrine.

Because of popular demand, the statue was brought to Quito, and remained here for some time. One pious woman dedicated all her children to Our Lady, begging her "to be their godmother." One baby was born dead. The sorrowing mother sent her husband to the shrine with the dead baby, and said, "You tell Our Lady that she has been godmother to all my children—all lovely, beautiful, healthy children, and ask her if she now wants to be godmother to one that is dead?" On presenting this strange prayer to Our Lady, the father was startled to see that the child was not dead, but alive. In commemoration of this miracle, a painter made a picture of Our Lady with two babies, one on each arm—her own, and the restored Indian baby.

The people of Quito maintain that it has never rained on a day that there was a procession of Our Lady of Quinche or, if it did rain, the rain stopped to let the procession through. Many times when there has been drought or some other disastrous type of weather, a special procession is organized and the Virgin of the Rocks is carried

through the streets. And, so it is said, she had always provided the kind of weather that the people needed when they remembred to ask her for it.

The statue is often called in endearment, "La Pequenita," the little one.

# *Venezuela*

## OUR LADY OF COROMOTO

DURING the Spanish colonization of Venezuela, one tribe of Indians called the Coromotos refused to listen to the missionaries and become Christians. Where other Indians gathered around the priests and formed little villages, these went into the wilderness of the El Tocuyo River and stayed there.

In the year 1652, most of the tribe were witnesses to an apparition of Our Lady. They did not know who she was. But when they saw her walking on the river, which any sensible Indian knew could not happen, they realized that they were in the presence of something more than natural. She beckoned to them, spoke to them in their own language, and invited them to go to the priests and be baptized. The chief, who was fiercely anti-Spanish, persuaded them that they should not go. However, after the apparition had been repeated several times, most of the tribe left the chief and went to see what the Spanish Fathers could tell them about the strange and beautiful Lady who walked on the waters.

It is quite likely that the wife and children of the chief were in the group who went to the priests for instruction, and that they received Baptism with the rest of the tribe. This would have been one reason why he followed the tribe to the Christian village, and hung about on the

outskirts of the group, listening and unconvinced. The missionaries found him determined not to submit to Baptism. Not much is recorded of this period in the story.

However, shortly after this, Our Lady appeared to the chief himself, and asked him to be baptized. Angry, he aimed his bow at her and fired an arrow. The Lady disappeared and as he turned away, feeling triumphant, he realized that he was holding something in his hand. He looked, and saw a small stone with a figure carved upon it. He did not have to ask whose picture it was. He would gladly have thrown the stone away, but could not seem to do so. Angry and frightened, he took it home and hid it in the thatched roof of his house.

The story of the old chief, battling with himself all that night, is the story of any soul wrestling with Grace. He knew that he must get rid of the stone or he would bow to the white man's religion. He could not think of a good way to destroy it. At last, the next afternoon, he resolved on a desperate move—he would burn down the hut with the stone in it. No one need ever know. He did not know how much more clever the Lady was than he; for when he went to look, the stone was gone. His own children, playing in the hut, had found it, recognized it for a holy picture, and run immediately to the Fathers with it. Defeated, the old chief went to them and asked for Baptism.

The trials of the chief were not yet over. He submitted to the instructions of the Fathers for some time. Then one day he rebelled against the strict Christian life and the demands it made upon human nature. It seemed to him much better to be free and pagan. So he slipped away

and went back to the jungle. He had not gone far when he was bitten by a poisonous snake. He knew that he would die very soon, and he had faith enough to want not to die without Baptism. He prayed desperately to the Lady who had appeared to him, and had the happiness of being baptized after all.

The Coromotos and their neighboring tribes have long since blended into a Christian nation, with a tender devotion to Our Blessed Mother, as might be expected. The church where the chief's stone picture was placed is now a great National Basilica in Guanare, Venezuela. In 1952, the 300th anniversary of Our Lady's appearance to the Coromoto Indians, a beautiful ceremony was held in the church. Thousands of people came for a Marian Congress, and the image of Our Lady was crowned with many jewels as a token of her people's love.



# *Philippine Islands*

## OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY, MANILA

THE FEAST OF OUR LADY, "La Naval," commemorates a victory in the seventeenth century over the enemies of both the Faith and the freedom of the Philippine people. There were five separate battles, fought at different times over a period of eight months and ending, appropriately enough, in October, which many nations consecrate to Our Lady's rosary. The Lady of Victory who assured these battles was Our Lady of the Rosary.

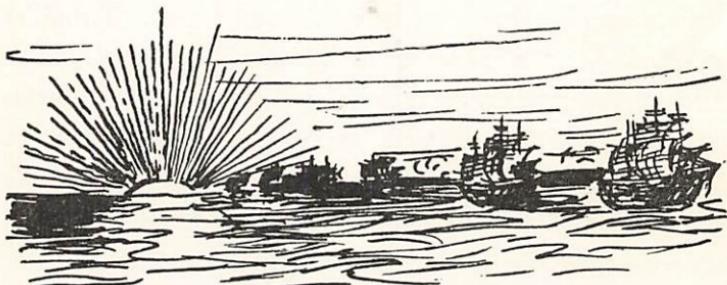
In March, 1646, Spanish and Filipino alike were dismayed to hear that a fleet of five Dutch pirate ships was bearing down on Manila. They carried the double threat of conquest and Protestantism. And they had chosen a time when there were no Spanish warships to defend Manila.

Two commercial galleons, "The Rosary" and "The Incarnation," were given by their owners and hastily fitted with arms. Each ship—like all Spanish ships of the time—had a special shrine to Our Lady on board. Two Chinese junks and a number of unseaworthy small ships made up the rest of the navy, but only the two galleons went out to meet the pirates. The men on board had dedicated the venture to Our Lady of the Rosary, and as they sailed into position for battle they recited the rosary on the decks. There was no human explanation for what fol-

lowed. The Dutch ships were warships, five in number; the Spanish had only two old cargo-ships, badly fitted with a few guns. Yet at sunset the Dutch fled, beaten, and the defenders came home covered with glory. The victory was, without argument, credited to Our Lady.

The "Rosary" and the "Incarnation" stayed on duty patrolling the waters for most of the summer. Late in July they found that they had been trapped in a narrow strait by a larger Dutch fleet—seven new vessels—and were in no position to fight. Finally the Dutch ships turned toward Manila and the two little ships gave chase. There was a band playing on board the Dutch flagship as they closed in at sunset, but at sunrise there was no music; broken and disgraced, the pirates once more took to flight. It was a second miraculous victory for Our Lady of the Rosary. The men who had taken part in this second battle had vowed to Our Lady that if victory were theirs, they would make a pilgrimage barefoot to the church of Saint Dominic in Manila. When they arrived safely home, they gratefully fulfilled their vow.

After the third battle, the people of Manila began to call the ships "the galleons of the miracle." A fourth



time, the enemy came and was defeated. A fifth time the Dutch fleet appeared, angered and determined. Their pride stung by such defeats, they resolved to win this time or lose every vessel. They began the battle by attacking the two Spanish ships which they found anchored and with the wind against them. Unable to move, the "Rosary" and the "Incarnation" fought where they were. In this battle, if in no other, they proved that victory is not always won by the fighter who has the advantage. For here, as in the other battles, the pirates were defeated by the champions of Our Lady, and limped away never to return.

In all, fifteen warships were defeated and set to flight by the two old galleons and their Victorious Queen. There is no question at all why the Rosary is the favorite Philippine devotion, nor why the Feast of La Naval is kept with such great solemnity even today.

It is actually the anniversary of the Vow that is remembered, since the valiant men who fought the battles promised, in the name of their people, that this vow would be kept annually. Each year Manila celebrates at the shrine of the Most Holy Virgin of the Rosary the miraculous events of those troubled months of 300 years ago.

The statue of Our Lady, "La Naval," was made by a Chinese artist of the sixteenth century and given to the Shrine of Victory in the church of St. Dominic. This shrine has been destroyed several times, by fire, earthquakes and more recently by bombs in 1941. Yet the statue has never been hurt. It is at present enshrined at the chapel of the Holy Rosary in the Catholic University of the Philippines.

# *Ceylon*

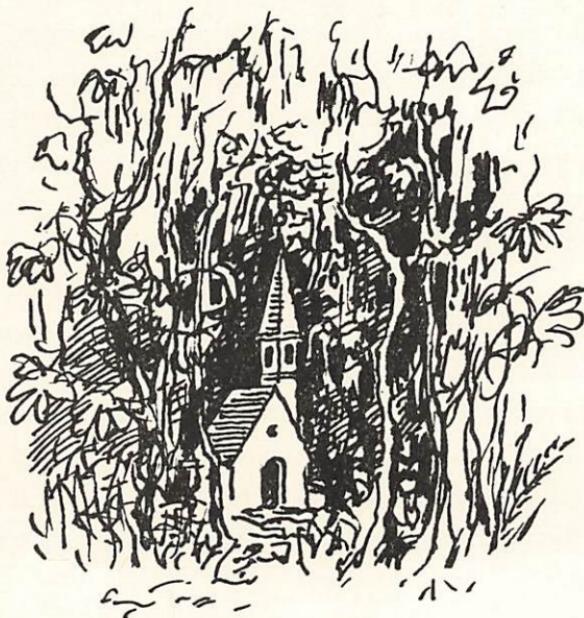
## OUR LADY OF MADHU

CEYLON was settled by the Portuguese, who have a tender devotion to Our Lady which they promptly taught to the natives. There was already a thriving shrine of Our Lady when the Dutch conquered Ceylon and began vigorously to stamp out Catholicism. At this time a band of Catholics made up of twenty native families took their beloved statue and disappeared into the jungle where no white man could follow them.

Here for many years Our Lady and her people were exiled. More and more Catholics went into the jungle until more than seven hundred of them gathered together and built a temporary shrine. Replaced several times, this finally grew into the beautiful church which still exists in the jungles of Madhu.

Here for most of the year Our Lady lives alone in her church, surrounded by the vivid plants of the jungle and the prowling animals, for no one can live in the jungle during the wet season. When the rains are over, Our Lady's children—Catholic, Moslem, Hindu—from all parts of the Island, prepare for the journey to Madhu. Family and belongings are loaded onto a cart and preparations are made for a trip lasting a month. All the way to the Shrine the pilgrims sing litanies and Rosaries just as they do in England or Fatima, and also songs and

dances that are peculiar to the Lady of the Jungle. When the Shrine comes in sight at the end of a long journey, the people cry out "Mother, Mother," in their several languages and shout with joy.



The statue of Our Lady of Madhu is Our Lady of the Rosary. She and her Son are dressed in white silk and jewels, and a large golden rosary is one of the principal decorations. Our Lady's head is unveiled and she wears a huge crown. The sick are not allowed in the Church, but they gather in a tent outside and try to make enough noise so that Our Lady will hear them.

Beginning in April, the celebrations last for several days. During this time, the statue is carried in procession outside the church so that the sick might see her. The

procession is accompanied by a brass band which would sound very strange to our Western ears but which to her people of Ceylon is very beautiful. At the feast which closes the celebration, people of all classes sit down together, an almost unheard of thing in the East.

For many years the dust of the yard surrounding the church, which is of a peculiar rust color, has been used much as we use Lourdes water. It is supposed to be particularly effective to cure the bites of poisonous serpents, of which there are many in the jungle.

During World War II when there was danger of a Japanese invasion, the Bishop of Tewatte promised Our Lady that if they were spared the horrors of an invasion he would have a shrine built at Tewatte. No one will ever know exactly why the Japanese turned away and left the rich prize of Ceylon without molesting it; that is, no one but the faithful children of Our Lady, who had learned at the shrine of Madhu that their Mother would take care of them.

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